

# MILITARY ILLUSTRATED

## PAST & PRESENT

No.53 OCTOBER 1992

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WIN A TOUR OF THE NORMANDY BEACHES — SEE COMPETITION INSIDE!

**THE EARL OF ESSEX'S FOOTE  
'LEATHER JACKET SOLDIERS' OF  
THE AMERICAN SOUTH-WEST  
GENERAL SIR PETER DE LA BILLIERE**

**ARTILLERY AT EDGEHILL  
71st HIGHLAND LIGHT INFANTRY  
ON THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER  
AIRBORNE ARMADA, 1944**

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No. 53

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Our front cover illustrations show On the left, Members of 4th Armoured Brigade with one of their Challengers during Operation 'Grandby', 1991 (Bob Morrison/Military Scene). On the right, a member of the 101st Airborne Division complete with bazooka boards a C-47 en route for Normandy, 1944 (MARS).

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# EDITOR'S NOTES

THE FIRST PRIZE of a silver-plated quarter-scale model of the immortal .303in Vickers machine-gun created by Wilf Charles of Present Arms Ltd of Hereford has been won by Mr Robert Bush of Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex.

The two runners-up, who will each receive special leather-bound, numbered, limited edition copies of the book *Into The Valley of Death: The British Cavalry Division At Balaclava, 1854*, by John and Boris Mollo with colour plates by Bryan Fosten, are: Dr R.N.W. Thomas of Poole, Dorset; and Mr Martin Rowland of Peterborough, Ontario, Canada.

## 'SILVER VICKERS' COMPETITION WINNERS

The five runners-up, who each receive a free one year's subscription to *Military Illustrated*, are: Mr Ian Thompson of Skelmersdale, Lancs; Mr Nigel Dorrrington of Birmingham; Mr Kevan Cotton of Stafford; Mr K.P. Grubb of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire; and Mr Donald Cameron of Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.

The answers to the questions are as follows:

A1, 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers (*MI/3*, p7); A2, Berthier (*MI/7*,

p55); A3, Yellow cap bands (*MI/40*, p29); A4, Major von Keller (*MI/33*, p34); A5, 1943 (*MI/37*, p10); A6, Chatti (*MI/46*, p9); A7, Vladimir Petrov (*MI/10*, p18); A8, Top Malo House (*MI/3*, p22);

B1, William Robinson (*MI/25*, p25); B2, Daniel Theron (*MI/26*, p28); B3, He was black (*MI/20*, p55); B4, Martin Hurtado (*MI/43*, p51); B5, Black, faced blue (*MI/39*, p45); B6, Erik Emmune (*MI/47*, p15); B7, Ontario (*MI/26*, p31);

B8, Evelyn Wood (*MI/8*, p49); C1, Pope John Paul II (*MI/36*, p49); C2, Matthias Corvinus (*MI/31*, p30); C3, Lakshmi Bai, Rani of Jhansi (*MI/24*, p26); C4, Green (*MI/6*, p29); C5, Stieng (*MI/10*, p3); C6, Ben McCulloch (*MI/49*, p46); C7, No 3 Commando (*MI/10*, p43); C8, Bill Mauldin (*MI/37*, p51).

To put those of you who gave Audie Murphy as the answer to C8 out of your misery, Murphy played Henry himself.

Congratulations to the winners and commiserations to all our other readers who took part. Better luck in our Normandy Tour Competition!

Bruce Quarrie

## ON THE SCREEN

### Video releases to rent *Ironclads* (First Independent: PG)

THE NAVAL aspects of the American Civil War have received scant attention from Hollywood. The celebrated duel between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* off Hampton Roads, Virginia, which has gone down in history as the first battle between ironclad warships, featured significantly only in Lew Ayres' *Hearts in Bondage* (1936). However, the story is now the subject of Delbert Mann's 1991 television movie *Ironclads*, which has its premiere in England on video.

The story begins with Union forces evacuating Norfolk, Virginia in April 1861. Union seaman Leslie Harmon (Alex Hyde-White) deliberately prevents the vital dry dock from being mined, in order to save civilians in the town from the explosion. He is offered a pardon if he accompanies Betty Stuart (Virginia Masden), a Southern Belle who is spying for the North, to discover details of the *Virginia*, an ironclad warship the Confederates are rebuilding from the burnt Northern ship *Merrimac*. Complications arise when Betty realises that her lover Catesby Jones (Reed Edward Diamond), Second Officer on the *Virginia*, is endangered by the information she has given the North. She is arrested by Confederate Secret Service agent Lieutenant Guilford (Philip Casnoff), and threatened with hanging if she refuses to reveal the identity of her accomplices.

Meanwhile, Abraham Lincoln (James Getty) and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles (Conrad McLaren) commission Norwegian inventor John Ericsson (Fritz Weaver) to construct the *Monitor*, an ironclad with a unique revolving turret. The rest of the film concerns how the *Virginia*, under the com-

mand of Captain John Buchanan, sinks two Northern warships blockading Norfolk, before the arrival of the *Monitor*. The scene is set for the historic duel to take place.

Civil War buffs will be pleased to note that the naval actions are portrayed with some accuracy, although the *Merrimac* inexplicably does not sink its first victim, the *Cumberland* (here called the *Government*), by ramming. The model-work and special effects are convincing, and the period detail is pleasing. The screenplay commendably emphasises details such as the problems of manoeuvrability in shallow waters and armour thickness, but this attention to authenticity is undercut by a banal personal story, so typical of American historical television drama.

**Video Releases to Buy**  
*North and South II* (Warner Home Video: 15)  
*Gallipoli* (CIC: PG)  
*Raid on Rommel* (CIC: 15)  
*Apocalypse Now* (CIC: 18)  
*Born on the Fourth of July* (CIC: 18)  
*Flight of the Intruder* (CIC: 15)

Civil War buffs will doubtless find some interest in Kevin Connor's *North and South II*, the sequel to *North and South* (reviewed in 'MI' 42) and based on John Jakes' bestselling novel *Love and War*. It consists of three tapes, each lasting about two and a half hours, and continues the stories of George Hazard (James Read), from a Pennsylvania industrial family, and the South Carolinian plantation owner Orry Main (Patrick Swayze). The two friends find themselves on opposite sides once hostilities have commenced. George's brother Billy (Parker Stevenson) joins Berdan's Sharpshooters while his unstable Abolitionist sister Virgilia (Kirsty

Alley) joins the Sanitary Commission as a nurse. Orry's cousin Charles (Lewis Smith) rides with Wade Hampton's Confederate cavalry, while his scheming sister Ashton (Terri Garber) joins forces with George and Orry's West Point enemy Elkanah Bent (Philip Casnoff) to attempt an insurrection in the South. Guest stars include Hal Holbrook as Lincoln and Lloyd Bridges as Jefferson Davis.

This mini series, like the thousand-plus pages novel on which it is based, is unashamed melodrama intended to appeal to the widest possible audience. The production is handsomely mounted, and those with the patience to sit through the soap-opera contrivances will be rewarded by three excellent battle sequences, as well as several smaller skirmishes. The First Bull Run sequence, in the first part, features a large Confederate cavalry charge, and depicts the chaotic Union retreat. The battle of Antietam in the second part shows the savage fighting round the sunken road. The third part includes the siege of Petersburg, and features a large-scale Union attack on Confederate trenches. Up to 1,500 American re-enactors were involved in the large-scale battle sequences which were shot at Natchez, Mississippi.

Most wide-screen films shown on television or released on video are 'panned and scanned' to follow the action across the screen. This deplorable practice not only ruins photographic composition, but introduces camera movements and/or cuts when none originally existed. CIC have commendably re-released six war-movies, four of which can be considered classics, in the letter-box format in which they were originally shot.

In Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* (1981), two young Australians (Mel Gibson and Mark Lee) join the Australian

Light Horse to fight with the ANZACs in Europe during World War I, but find themselves involved in the ill-fated Dardanelles campaign. Jesse Hibbs *To Hell and Back* (1955) (reviewed in 'MI' 4) is based on Audie Murphy's autobiographical wartime experiences. Audie Murphy plays himself and recreates the situations which made him America's most decorated soldier in World War II. Henry Hathaway's *Raid on Rommel* (1971) stars Richard Burton as British Intelligence officer Captain Alec Foster who leads a mixed force of Commandos and medical personnel in a mission to destroy a huge German gun emplacement which would endanger an Allied naval attack on Tobruk. Rommel (Wolfgang Preiss) is revealed to be an ardent philatelist! The more spectacular action sequences were originally shot for Arthur Hiller's *Tobruk* (1967).

*Apocalypse Now* (1979) was Francis Ford Coppola's mesmeric evocation of the Vietnam war, inspired by Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*. Martin Sheen plays Lieutenant Benjamin Willard, assigned to locate and assassinate the renegade Green Beret Colonel Kurtz (Marlon Brando) who is waging his own private war against the North Vietnamese with the help of Montagnard tribesmen. This version features the 'apocalyptic end credit sequence' not seen in the film's West End run. *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), based on the experiences of paraplegic Vietnam veteran Ron Kovac, was Oliver Stone's follow up to his own *Platoon* (1986) and stars Tom Cruise. Lastly, John Milius' *Flight of the Intruder* (1990) is an attempt to portray the air war over Vietnam.

Stephen J. Greenhill

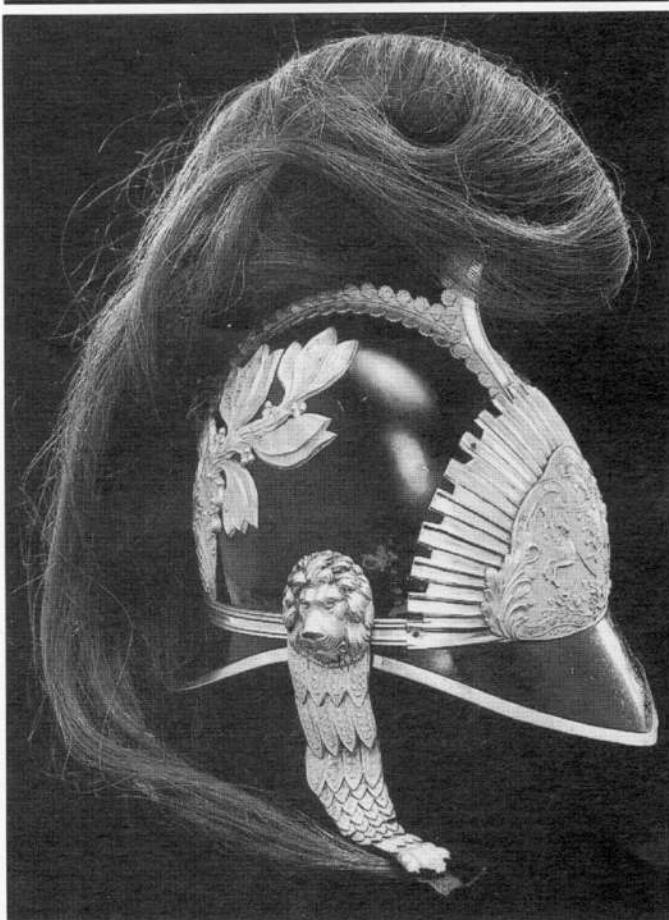
JULY SAW A number of arms and armour sales but once again the messages that they sent were conflicting. There were signs of a rising demand in some areas which meant that better prices were achieved but there were also some rather depressing features. How much these changes are due to the continuing recession and how much is due to simple changes in fashion and demand is not clear.

At the popular end of the market, Kent Sales' latest results signalled a fall in demand for middle range Third Reich edged weapons whereas there was an increasing market for material connected with Sir Oswald Moseley's Blackshirt fascist movement of the 1930s. A fairly crude tin badge worn by the aggressive 'stewards' who policed his meetings and dealt roughly with any hecklers realised £55. Tony Marriott-Smith, who so seldom seems surprised by anything that happens in the trade, was rather taken aback when a group of English made, Second World War, United States Army Air Force shoulder patches which he had estimated at £20-£40 each sold at around £120 each!

One of the hazards of auctioneering is the clash of dates when important sales are quite innocently planned for the same day. Many of the bigger rooms do co-operate unofficially and try to check the coming year's timetable but with the best will it is impossible to avoid some clashes. This happened on Wednesday 29 July when Sotheby's held a sale of medals at their Sussex rooms at Billingshurst at the same time as Buckland, Dix and Wood held one in London. This always places the dealers in a quandary as to which sale to attend and on this occasion London appeared to win and Billingshurst was poorly attended. Fortunately for Sotheby's there were plenty of commission or postal bids so that the sales results were good, but it is not clear what effect,

*A flintlock pistol from the armouries of Tippoo Sultan with typical tiger motif decoration. It is dated 1221 which is the equivalent of 1792/3, some six years before the battle of Seringapatam in which Tippoo was killed. (Photos courtesy Sotheby's)*

## THE AUCTION SCENE



if any, the situation had on prices. Such events show clearly the supreme importance of reputation and good cataloguing since people who know that they can rely on the accuracy of the descriptions in the catalogue are prepared to bid without viewing — something one would hesitate to do if there was any doubt about the accuracy and honesty of the cataloguer. This trust in itself creates a dilemma for catalogue entries cost money and the longer the entry the greater the cost. However, cut the description and the chances of someone bidding without viewing could be reduced.

The arms and armour section of the Sotheby sale did well with the majority of lots selling at around the estimate. The big surprise was a Bowie knife by J.D. Chevalier of New

York which was estimated at £300-400 and sold for £2,000! Incidentally, the other London medal sale was also very successful with a 'B.I.' — auctioneer's jargon for value of lots which did not sell only just over 2% which, for these days, is outstandingly good.

There was a sale of modern sporting guns and vintage firearms at Christies on 15 July and there were some pleasant surprises for the vendors. A cased .455 Webley-Kaufmann cartridge revolver sold at £825 whilst a Webley Fosbery self cocking revolver with a 4in barrel sold for an astonishing £2,530. A hammer 16-bore gun by J. Manton

and converted from percussion was purchased by the Royal Armouries for £6,600. The explanation for this high price was simply the provenance since the gun had been presented by Queen Victoria to her servant, the dour Highlander John Brown. This is yet another example of the importance of provenance which can raise the price of a fairly ordinary piece to exceptional heights. However, this provenance has to be well established as it was in this case and a statement such as 'believed to have belonged to...' carries little real weight. A similar high price is likely when Sotheby's sell a Sten gun in their 17 September sale which belonged to the wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill. It has been deactivated so that it can be purchased without any legal restriction.

Christies held a sale of arms and armour a week later and the 252 lots included some very good pieces which fetched realistic prices. Their next sale, also in September, will be for the second part of the armoury of the Princes zu Salm-Reifferscheidt-Dyck and if this does as well as the first sale there should be some good prices.

Bonhams had a mixed sale of firearms, arms, armour and militaria on 28 July. Whilst the prices were generally low they were, with a few exceptions, within the broad estimates. An Indo-Persian *kilij* complete with sheath did exceed the estimate, selling for £1,050 against a suggested £500-£600. Interest in modern classic cartridge weapons was shown by £550 for a 'Broomhandle' Mauser self-loader with holster and £720 for a long barrel Luger and holster. A super-imposed load double-barrelled percussion shotgun made in Liège sold for £3,200 but most of the top prices went on modern sporting guns showing that there is still money to spare in some quarters.

September is going to be a busy month for in addition to the Christies' top quality sale, Sotheby's have an aviation sale which will include the Victoria Cross group of the World War I flying ace Major 'Mick' Mannock. From April 1917 to July 1918 this top scorer was credited with 73 victories and this was after being repatriated from Turkey on the grounds of poor health and bad eyesight. It is confidently expected that these medals are likely to generate a record price for this prime gallantry award. In addition to the usual run of aviation material there are likely to be a number of 'planes included in the sale. The military sale on 17 September will include a fine and rare flintlock pistol from the armoury of Tippoo Sultan. This Indian prince, a determined enemy of England in India, delighted in weapons decorated with tiger motifs and this pistol is no exception. There is also a dagger from the same source. Another item of Indian interest is a superb helmet, circa 1820, of the Indian Artillery.

Frederick Wilkinson





*Detail from a painting by the Dutch artist Van Beest. Note the buttoned turned back cuff and characteristic shoulder roll or wing.*

ON 28 JULY 1642, thousands of volunteers registered in the New Artillery Gardens in London for service in the Earl of Essex's army. Relations between Parliament and King Charles I had deteriorated to the point where large-scale military action was seen as necessary.

Parliament decided to raise an army to be commanded by the Earl of Essex which would include 20 regiments of 1,200 infantry. These included four

*Figure taken from a woodcut print of 1639 showing an English musketeer with long narrow breeches and hose turned down in imitation of bucket top boots. He wears an old-fashioned Spanish morion.*



# Essex's Foote

STUART PEACHEY

Paintings by RICK SCOLLINS,  
Sketches by ALAN TURTON

IN THIS article we examine the infantry of the main Parliamentary field army during the period 1642-45. The author's researches into the contentious subjects of headgear and coat colours are particularly welcome.

out of a batch of five regiments previously authorised for service against the rebels in Ireland. These units seem to have not yet been recruited.

The embryonic core of the army left London for Coventry in early August and, after fighting a battle at Southam in Warwickshire before their uniform coats arrived, moved on to Northampton. Units joined the field army piecemeal as they became ready. The army moved on to capture Worcester on 24 September, shadowing the King's army westward. Here the more laggardly units joined up. One regiment, William Bampfield's, supposedly of Essex's army, missed this rendezvous and never served with this field army. The other 19 foot regiments all gathered in the south-west midlands.

In mid-October the King's army at Shrewsbury set off towards London with the Earl of Essex following. Twelve of Essex's foot regiments were present when the armies met at Edgehill on 23 October 1642. As the battle started, most of the horse and five of the foot regiments, Chomlies, Wharton's, Fairfax's, Mandeville's and Charles Essex's, fled. The remaining seven regiments with a few horse attacked the Royalist Foot and fought till dark. The armies separated and three fresh Parliamentarian units, Grantham's, Hampden's and Rochford's, arrived, dissuading the dominant Royalists from resuming large-scale action. The Royalists instead captured Banbury, held by Lord Peterborough's and part of Lord Say and Sele's foot regiments.

Essex's army fell back to London leaving three regiments, Sir John Merrick's, Lord Stamford's and Oliver St John's, cut off in the west. These units formed the core of regional armies in the West Country and never rejoined the main army. During the retreat to London Hampden's and Grantham's

were in action near Aylesbury and Grantham's disappeared, possibly destroyed in this minor battle.

As the Royalists approached London, Holle's and Brook's regiments were stationed at Bredford to cover the western approaches. On 12 November the Royalists under Prince Rupert of the Rhine launched a surprise attack through fog storming the town. The defenders lost large numbers captured or drowned in the Thames trying to escape. The following day the remains of Essex's army, bolstered by the London Trained Bands, drew up on Turnham Green. The outnumbered Royalists decided not to attack and fell back towards Reading.

Essex's army was never strong enough again to face the Royalist field army without assistance from other Parliamentarian forces, although it continued to be the principal part of the forces defending the south-east.

Over the winter Essex reorganised his damaged army. A new army of seven regiments under the Earl of Warwick was incorporated into Essex's army on 22 November and over the winter seven of the most damaged original regiments, Holle's, Brook's, Fairfax's, Grantham's, Charles Essex's, Mandeville's and Wharton's, were disbanded. A further two regiments, Rochford's and Peterborough's, were disbanded in the spring as the army campaigned in the Thames Valley, assisted by a brigade from East Anglia.

The main action was the siege and capture of Reading. Disease broke out in the army, probably typhus. Losses, almost entirely due to disease and desertion, were high in this period. In 70 days between 11 April and 21 June 1643, Skippon's regiment lost 376 out of 1,033 men (36%), Langham's 360 out of 908 (33%), and Robart's 330



*Typical pikeman from the French drill book *Le Marechal de Bataille*, 1647.*

out of 723 men (45%), roughly five men per regiment per day.

The army spent the summer too weak to attack Oxford, but the destruction of most Parliamentarian forces in the West Country and the Royalist siege of Gloucester caused a major effort. Essex's army was reinforced with a brigade of seven regiments of militia and regulars belonging to London and two regiments from Kent. Essex's men were reclothed before setting out on the march to Gloucester. On the return journey they had to fight a major battle at Newbury in order to reach London and in the Royalist pursuit after the battle, Reading was lost.

*Carved wooden figures taken from a group which formed stair rail finials in 'Cromwell House', Highgate. Headgear appears to be befeathered felt hats.*



*Robert Devereux, third Earl of Essex, some time before the Civil War, attributed to Daniel Mytens. (National Portrait Gallery, London.)*

The army spent the winter of 1643 holding off Royalist pressure in the Newport Pagnell area, with the assistance of fresh London forces. Essex's units were desperately understrength; of the 11 regiments whose numbers are known in December, the average strength was less than 120 men, and four regiments had less than 90 men each spread round ten companies.

In the spring of 1644 the army was reorganised again and reduced to eight regiments. Langham's, Constable's and Holmstead's were disbanded and Ballard's and Thompson's detached from the army for garrison duties. Recruits were conscripted to fill the ranks.

In May Essex's eight regiments plus three strong London Auxiliary regiments and Sir William Waller's army advanced on Oxford. The King retreated with a flying column north-westward with Waller in pursuit, and Essex proceeded south-west to relieve besieged Parliamentarian garrisons in Lyme Regis, Poole and Plymouth.

Waller's army was broken by the King at Cropredy Bridge and the main Royal army set off in pursuit of Essex. The Earl had penetrated into the Royalist stronghold of Cornwall, but found himself trapped between three Royalist armies and the sea. The Earl escaped by boat but the Foot were forced to surrender on terms. They lost their arms and were stripped of much of their clothing by the locals as they marched to Portsmouth through the autumn.

The survivors were reclothed and re-equipped at Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. Eager for revenge, they marched for three days through pouring rain to link up with an army from the Eastern Association and the remains of Waller's forces in time for the second battle of Newbury, a partial victory. Essex's foot withdrew to winter quarters in Reading. The Earl had taken to his bed before Newbury after marching at the head of his men in the rain, and in the spring Parliament ordered the remains of Essex's and Waller's armies to be combined with part of the Eastern Association forces to form on 5 April 1645 the New Model Army.

Three of Essex's regiments seem to have been formed into



Walter Lloyd's regiment of foot in the New Model which eventually became part of General Monk's regiment. This regiment was the only unit not to be disbanded at the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and became the Coldstream Guards.

#### RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISATION

Officers were commissioned for the regiments and set about raising their own men. Three regiments, Holle's, Chomile's and Merrick's, and possibly part of a fourth, Lord Stamford's, seem to have been raised from the first rush of volunteers in London. These regiments attained their full theoretical strengths of 1,200 men split into ten companies.

Colonel's Company	200
Lieutenant-Colonel's Company	160
Sergeant Major's Company	140
Seven Captains' Companies	100

Recruitment soon slowed and Parliament reduced its target to 800 men for the remaining regiments with two exceptions, the Earl of Essex's own regiment, 1,500-strong, and John

Hampden's, 1,000-strong. Units were raised in the southeast both from the London conurbation with a population of about a third of a million, and the surrounding rural counties including Essex and Suffolk.

The seven regiments of the Earl of Warwick's army were mostly intended to have 1,200 men although Phillip Skippon's aimed for 1,500 and Bulstrode's 800. Stapley's regiment seems never to have served with the field army.

Regiments were referred to by the names of their colonels. For simplicity the name of the original colonel is used throughout in this article although a number of regiments changed commander. For example, when John Hampden was killed at Chalgrove Field in 1643, his regiment was taken over by Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Tyrell and later by another officer, Richard Ingoldsby.

Normally each company was commanded by a captain or a field officer (Colonel, Lieutenant-Colonel or Sergeant-Major) and contained two sergeants, two drummers and three corporals. The corporals

Rick Scollins' reconstructions show: A: Musketeer, Lord Robart's Regiment of Foot, July 1643.

This man wears a knitted 1lb Monmouth Cap containing his company ribbons. After over 10 months' continuous wear his issue clothing is faded and worn and his shoes have disintegrated and been replaced by startups. His stockings have been dyed in buckthorn berries, and counterman's rather than a commercial dyestuff. The breeches are of natural coloured wool. About his torso are carried a snapsack over one shoulder and a bandolier of charges with a bullet bag and priming flask. A simple sword is carried on a waistbelt. Beneath his coat he wears a shirt and doublet.

B: Musketeer, Colonel Charles Essex's Regiment of Foot, 23 October 1642.

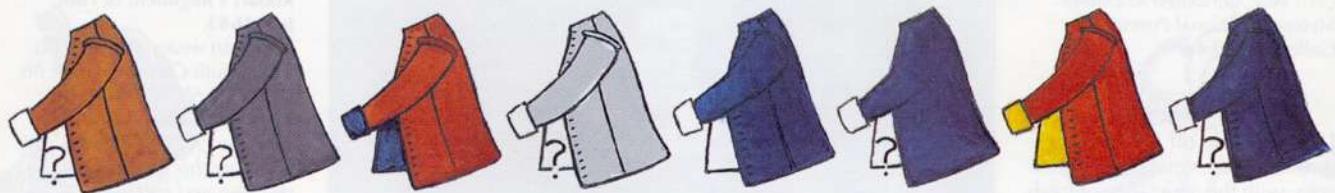
This soldier clearly shows beneath his coat a doublet and shirt. His ribbons are sewn onto his coat, a practice later frowned upon as it seems the colours were changed if the officer commanding the company changed and this damaged the coats. His knitted hat is of a Tudor design but which could still be found illustrated on some Londoners at this time. His issue shoes are still intact after less than two months of marching. He has also retained his musket rest so far.

C: Pikeman, Colonel John Hampden's Regiment of Foot, May 1643.

This pikeman has either not been issued with armour or has discarded it by this date. His doublet is undersized, a complaint against some issued items at this period. Coming probably from rural Buckinghamshire, he wears practical footwear, startups which could be either laced or buttoned up. He carries a sword although by the middle of the war some royalist regiments recorded that hardly one man in ten had one. On his head is a small 4 ounce Monmouth cap. His main weapon is an ash pike probably 16 feet long designed to stop cavalry but relatively ineffective against infantry.

D: Pikeman, Colonel George Langham's Regiment of Foot, December 1642.

This regiment was newly raised at this date and he is dressed in freshly issued equipment although the civilian clothing beneath is showing signs of wear. Langham's were issued with armour but the Moroni helmet would be a private acquisition. He wears issue shoes and two pairs of stockings in the winter weather.



A



B





C



D



**Regiments****August 1642**

Earl of Essex  
Earl of Peterborough  
Earl of Stamford  
Lord Say and Sele  
Lord Rochford  
Lord St John  
Lord Brooks  
Lord Mandeville  
Lord Robarts  
Lord Wharton  
Sir John Merrick  
Sir Henry Chomlie  
Sir Will Constable  
Sir William Fairfax

Denzill Holles  
Thomas Grantham  
John Hampden  
Charles Essex  
Thomas Ballard  
William Bampfield  
**Warwick's Army**  
Philip Skippons  
James Holbourn  
Harry Barcley  
John Holmstead  
George Langham  
Henry Bulstrode  
Anthony Stapley

**Summer 1643**

Earl of Essex  
John Hampden  
Thomas Ballard  
Sir Will Constable  
Lord Say and Sele  
Lord Robart  
Phillip Skippon  
James Holbourn  
Harry Barclay  
John Holmstead  
George Langham  
Henry Bulstrode  
George Thompson

**Summer 1644**

Earl of Essex  
John Hampden  
Lord Robart  
Lord Say and Sele  
Phillip Skippon  
James Holbourn  
Harry Barcley  
Henry Bulstrode

formed up in the rank and file while Colonels' companies often contained an extra sergeant. Drummers were mature men and were paid at the same rate as corporals. Each regiment would have a variety of additional officers including a surgeon, chaplain, wagon master and provost.

The rank and file in 1642 and 1643 were volunteers. Large numbers were apprentices who at this period would be middle-class youths mostly between 13 and 21, whose parents had paid for them to be apprenticed and learn a respectable trade on a pocket money income. Today's equivalent would be students in universities, polytechnics and higher education colleges. Parliament passed a law that time served in the army counted towards the seven years required in an apprenticeship. The lure of excitement and pay proved irresistible to many.

By the end of 1643 the supply of volunteers had dried up and the recruiting offices were closed. Parish constables were required to provide quotas of conscripts and these reluctant heroes were probably anyone without influence and generally considered undesirable. Conscripts often had to be guarded to prevent desertion before they left their home county.

In the 1644 reorganisation regiments were reduced from ten to eight companies each.

**ARMS AND ARMOUR**

At the start of the war two-thirds of the men of the foot regiments were issued with matchlock muskets, bandoliers of charges and musket rests. The remaining third were given pikes, probably 16 feet long. The Earl of Essex's regiment of foot had an extra three companies armed with firelocks and there was an additional tawny-coated company of firelocks to guard the artillery. (The firelock was an early flintlock, while matchlocks were fired with a

piece of smouldering saltpetre-impregnated cord. See 'The Matchlock Musket' in 'MI'/52.)

The pikemen of at least some regiments were issued with a back and breast plate and tassets (thigh guards). The Earl of Essex's own regiment even had gorgets, a form of steel collar. No evidence has been found yet for the issue of helmets to this army.

As the war continued the proportion of muskets seems generally to have increased and the musket rests and armour to be discarded. When re-armed after the Cornish disaster, six muskets were sent for every pike and there is no mention of armour or musket rests.

**CLOTHING**

While the authorities considered it normal to 'cloth' units raised for 'regular' service, it was not considered essential. Holles' and Chomlie's left London before any clothing was issued and fought a battle at Southam in Warwickshire before it arrived. Despite this hurried start, Parliament did issue clothing to 19 of the 20 regiments within a couple of months of the war starting in August 1642. The 20th regiment — Colonel William Bampfield's — never served in the field army and was raised in the West Country with little central assistance. One captain, staying in a Bristol inn, borrowed the money to raise his company from the landlord.

The clothing issued to the army was a basic minimum designed to supplement but not replace civilian dress. Each man should have received a coat, a shirt, a snapsack and a pair of shoes.

The coat was an overgarment of very dense broadcloth, more akin in weight to a duffle coat material than to modern woollen cloths. It was lined with lighter weight woollen cloth and gave a uniform colour to each regiment. It formed the first line of defence against the

weather for men often living rough in fields and barns.

The shirt of stout linen at first seems inessential but it was the practice at the period to add more shirts when the weather turned cold.

The snapsack of leather or canvas was similar to a large duffle bag. It performed the function of a rucksack and was an item most men, who worked near home, would not have possessed.

Shoes were expected to last only three months on the road and those issued would replace the civilian shoes when they disintegrated. In the short term the shoes and shirt were probably carried by the diligent in their snapsacks. The snapsacks might also contain up to three days' provisions of bread, cheese, biscuit (hard tack), dried peas and beans, preserved meats or oatmeal.

Under his new coat the recruit wore his civilian clothes. Normally this would consist of a shirt, doublet, breeches (sometimes suspended from the doublet), some type of headwear, stockings and footwear.

There were a number of common types of headwear. 26,000 Monmouth caps were sent in 1642 to troops fighting the Irish rebels, and many of the Earl of Essex's Foot may have used this warm and practical headwear. The cap weighed about 1lb of solid wool, was knitted then felted, and the nap raised or fluffed up with teasels. It had a moderately broad brim which became rather floppy with age and may have had a leather hatband inside the brim to prevent the wool irritating the forehead. Natural brown wool and red seem the most probable colours. These caps cost 22-24d — three days' wages for a labourer or soldier. A variation on the Monmouth cap lacked the brim, weighed 4oz and cost 6d, and although less protective in foul weather, was far easier to wear under a helmet. A substantial number of these may also have been worn.

In 1643 the Royalists issued large numbers of Monteroes to their troops and some of Essex's parliamentarians may have had caps of this design. In shape they resemble a jockey's cap

*Appearance in action? This figure comes from a woodcut used to illustrate a printed petition regarding the plight of the English army in Ireland in the late 1640s.*



### COAT COLOURS (See colour plates)

Regiment	Coat	Colour	Lining	Plate
Earl of Essex's	orange or tawny-orange			1
Lord Brooks'	purple or (blue??)			2
Lord Peterborough's	red	blue		3
Lord Wharton's	grey (???)			4
Lord Rochford's	blue	white		5
Lord Mandeville's	blue (???)			6
Lord Robarts'	red	yellow		7
Lord Stamford's	blue			8
Lord Oliver St John's	(?)			9
Lord Saye and Sele's	blue			10
Sir John Merrick's	grey			11
Sir Henry Chomlie's	blue			12
Sir William Constable's	blue			13
Sir William Fairfax's	grey (?)			14
Thomas Ballard's	grey	white		15
John Hampden's	green	yellow		16
Thomas Grantham's	tawny	white		17
Charles Essex's	tawny	yellow		18
Denzil Holles'	red			19
William Bamfield's				20
Phillip Skippon's	red	yellow		21
Anthony Stapley's	red	yellow		22
Henry Bulstrode's	(?)			23
Harry Barclay's	red	blue		24
John Holmstead's	red	white		25
James Holbourne's	(?)			26
George Langham's	blue	white		27
ATTACHED LONDON REGIMENTS				
Randall Mainwairing's	red	white		28
John Venn's	grey	yellow		29
ATTACHED KENT REGIMENTS				
William Springate's	red (white 1643 ???)			30
Sir William Brook's	(?)			31

with two brims, some of which could be folded down like a balaclava and were excellent foul weather wear.

Other simple tradesman's caps of linen may have been worn but these were indoor rather than outdoor wear. The least likely is the broad-brimmed felt hat. This was an expensive item of fashionwear which had a distressing habit of blowing off in wind and very easily becoming crumpled and bedraggled. While probably common among officers, it is unlikely many of the rank and file used them.

Footwear was of two main types, the shoe and the 'startup'. Many illustrations of the wealthy show a square-toed shoe with cutaway sides. This is probably largely a fashion feature. It seems probable that a round-toed almost closed-sided shoe would have been used for serious walking, in the same way that today a stout walking shoe differs from high heels.

The 'startup' is a name tentatively identified with a half boot coming up to the bottom of the calf. Boots of this type, lacing or buttoning up the front, are common in illustrations of poor farmers, shepherds and agricultural workers. They were considered old-fashioned at the

period by Londoners but many country-raised units such as Lord Say and Sele's regiment from north-west Essex may have had many men wearing them. Startups do not appear to have been issued by Parliament.

Shirts were made from a 10ft length of linen probably 36in wide, and weighed 20oz. The design is shown in illustrations and upper class surviving examples.

Gussets at the end of the neck, chests and thigh splits resist tearing. The cuffs would then be gathered and a small collar added. Large decorative collars with lace which might be worn by officers were probably detachable for washing.

Breeches were not particularly baggy, but loose fitting. They were also made of thick broad-cloth, linen-lined and often with a pair of leather pockets. Grey seems to have been the standard colour and they were often 31in long.

Doublets were also often worn. These could be wool or linen canvas and could have six or eight hanging tabs.

Stockings weighed around 9oz per pair and were normally grey or white. They could be knitted or made from loosely woven woollen cloth with some ability to 'give'.

### APPEARANCE IN ACTION

When freshly issued in 1642, regiments had uniform coats, even if breeches and headwear were a random assortment. As the following year progressed, new recruits in civilian coats were added, units were disbanded and amalgamated, bringing a scatter of other coat colours to those remaining and clothes were patched, darned and faded. In the 1643 reissue some units probably received more than one coat colour, and in the hurry of the 1644 reissue there may have been little uniformity. The un-uniformed new recruits were probably given bunches of ribbon in the company's colours in place of a uniform coat.

The general appearance was of a predominant colour with other coat colours and civilian wear, the decrepitness and lack of uniformity increasing throughout the year.

In the reclothing of the army at the end of August 1643 near Aylesbury, coats, shoes and snapsacks were issued, with shirts and stockings some weeks later. In late 1644, after the disaster in Cornwall, the army was for the first time issued with breeches and even possibly caps. No details are known of coat colours.

### Flags

Each company had its own colour approximately six feet square, made of silk taffeta or sarsnet and carried on a short pole. Only a very small proportion of the flags used in the English Civil War are known.

A common system of flags through a regiment which may well have been followed by many or all of Essex's units was for the Colonel's company to have a plain flag in the regiment's flag colour, the Lieutenant-Colonel's the same

with a red cross of St George on a white ground in the top corner next to the pole; the Sergeant-Major's colour contained either a wavy stream or one of the regiment's devices and the senior Captain's either one or two of the regiment's devices depending on the Major's choice. Each subsequent captain added one more device. There seems no standard way of laying out the pattern of devices. It seems that colours could be substantially changed when reissued. **M**

### 1642

Lord Brook's or Grantham's

Purple with the arms of

England in the canton and 7 stars  
Yellow with tawny stars

### 1644

(Before the Cornish surrender)

Earl of Essex's

Orange with white mullets

Aldrich's (ex-Say's)

Blue with gold lions rampant

Cunningham's (ex-Bulstrode's)

Green

Davis' (ex-Holboun's)

White??

After the surrender the army was issued with new colours. With two exceptions it is impossible to identify which unit received which colours.

Earl of Essex's

Orange with white mullets

Aldrich's (ex-Say's)

Blue with gold laurels

?

Crimson with yellow mullets

?

Crimson with white balls

?

Green with yellow billets

?

Green with yellow half moons

?

Green with white diamonds



# AIRBORNE ARMADA

THREE COMPLETE airborne divisions were assembled for the invasion of Normandy in June 1944, plus the 1st Special Air Service Brigade. The idea was that they would drop by parachute or land by glider to secure the eastern and western flanks of the beaches, capturing essential bridges and cross-roads and hindering the German response. That they largely succeeded was due to an awful lot of luck and immense courage from small groups of men who found themselves miles from their intended targets and simply had to 'make do'.

The three divisions involved

A TRIO OF recent books on airborne warfare prompted us to pick a few atmospheric photographs from our archives. The lucky winner of our latest competition (see page 20) will be able to visit some of these sites for himself.

were the veteran American 82nd Airborne Division under General Matthew B. Ridgway; the untried American 101st Airborne commanded by General Maxwell B. Taylor; and the equally untried British 6th Airborne Division under General Richard Gale. The 82nd comprised the veteran 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment and the fresh 507th and 508th, plus the 325th

Glider Infantry Regiment, 376th Artillery Battalion and 307th Engineer Battalion. The 101st comprised the 501st, 502nd and 506th Parachute Infantry Regiments, 328th and 401st Glider Infantry Regiments, 907th Glider Artillery Battalion and 326th Airborne Engineer Battalion. Finally, the British 6th Airborne Division comprised the 3rd Parachute Brigade (8 and 9

Para plus the 1st Canadian Para Battalion); the 5th Para Brigade (7, 12 and 13 Para); and the 6th Air-Landing Brigade (1st Battalion, Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Battalion, Ox & Bucks Light Infantry, and 12th Battalion, The Devonshire Regiment). In addition there was the pathfinder 22 Independent Parachute Company, five artillery batteries, an engineer battalion, signals and headquarters troops plus the 6th Airborne Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment and Light Squadron, Royal Armoured Corps. For further details see one of the books reviewed on page 38. **MI**



**Facing page, top** C-47 Skytrains/Dakotas tow Airspeed Horsa 25-man gliders across the Channel.

**This page, right** British para sergeant demonstrating the 'X' Type parachute harness over a sleeveless green jacket under which is worn a lifejacket. He carries a kitbag which would dangle beneath him during a jump.

**This page, far right** Side view of the parachute harness. This lance-corporal is carrying a Bren LMG in its specially designed valise.

**Facing page, bottom** Men of the 82nd 'All American' Division check each other's kit before embarking in their Horsas.

**This page, below** Men of the 101st 'Screaming Eagles' Division en route to Normandy in a C-47.





**This page, top left** An NCO of the 6th Air-Landing Brigade checks one of his men's equipment. He is carrying a folded 3.5in rocket launcher.

**This page, above** Three Horsas carrying men of the 2nd Ox & Bucks under Major John Howard alongside the Caen Canal bridge which they captured and which has since been christened 'Pegasus Bridge'.

**This page, left** Pegasus Bridge, firmly in Allied hands.

**Facing page, top left** Some of the American paras' toughest opposition came from Fallschirmjäger Regiment 6 outside Carentan.

**Facing page, bottom left** Unlike British paras, the Americans carried a reserve chute strapped to their chests.

**Facing page, bottom right** C-47s loose their Horsas and smaller CG-4A Haig/Hadrians.



## KNOWN PIECES

THERE ARE SEVERAL variants, depending upon manufacturer and the price an officer would accept. Six are known to exist. The first was recovered from the banks of the river Beresina in 1812 and is preserved in the Musée de Cracovie. The second belonged to Captain Jacques Louis Chatry de Lafosse, a captain of dragoons from 28 March 1813 who was promoted squadron leader on 17 March 1814. This example forms part of the Raoul and Jean Brunon Collection on view at the Château de l'Emperi in the Salon de Provence. The third was worn on 30 October 1813 at the battle of Hannau by squadron leader Claude Testot-Ferry. The fourth example was worn under the First Restoration during the 'Hundred Days' and, having for a long time been in a private French collection, is today in the hands of an American collector. A fifth helmet is believed to be that of Captain Dulac, worn during the Hundred Days' campaign and at Waterloo, has been donated to the museum in the town of Bourges, where it is kept in the reserve collection. The sixth helmet, in very good condition, is in a private collection. Finally, there exists in Monsieur P. Benoit's collection, a beautiful front plaque.

## DESCRIPTION

The following description is based upon that of the helmet of Captain Chatry de Lafosse, amplified by the variant examples also examined.

The cap is stamped in one piece, slightly more deeply than that of the trooper's helmet. Similarly, this helmet is 110mm deep while Testot-Ferry's measures 125mm and is particularly sloped at the rear. The turban has been re-covered with genuine panther skin; of the five known surviving helmets, none retains the original skin.

The visor is the same as on the trooper's helmet but varies in size. Lafosse's is 72mm compared with 80mm on Testot-Ferry's. They form a point at the front, which was less pronounced at the end of the Empire. The interior is folded in to a polished green tan. At the beginning of the Empire, the

*Magnificent Dragoon officer's helmet converted after the Restoration with Ancien Régime embossing and rosettes. The ornate richness of the decoration is clearly visible (Private Collection).*

# Empresses Dragoons Officers' Helmets

BERTRAND MALVAUX

CONTINUING FROM our article in 'MI' No 49, we examine the helmets of the Imperial Guard Dragoon officers, fond of great luxuries, who wore a helmet of the same model as the troops but much more richly decorated, with genuine panther skin turban, a pronounced 'Minerva' shape, finely gilded and with polished reliefs.\*

visor formed a more pronounced angle with the cap; in fact, the 'Minerva' shape did not really come into existence until the end of 1810, after

\*This article was originally published in French in issues 47 and 53 of the magazine *Tradition*. Any errors in translation are the sole responsibility of the Editor.

which the visor followed the shape of the cap and was copied at the back. Captain Dulac's cap is exceptional on one point, in that the turban and the visor form an exact line (height of the visor and turban totalling 170mm).

The rear peak or neck guard

did not appear until towards the end of the Empire, in a form more and more pronounced. Among the surviving helmets, only that of Captain Dulac has one, encircled and covered with panther skin.

The chinstraps are formed in two parts, the strap itself and the boss (*rosace*). The strap is of supple leather sheathed in black velour (or fine cloth), covered in 18 polished convex scales graduating from 55/56mm at the top to 17/18mm at the bottom. They terminate in a double gold cord with a golden-tressed tassel, the latter usually having their ends trimmed in accordance with the officer's grade. The bosses are the same as the troopers' except that the insides are sanded smooth and have a diameter of 65mm.

The square-section plume-holder, with its tubular part gradually narrowing towards



the base with a moulded part at top and bottom, is not tightly fitting. It is attached at top and bottom beside the left boss by a gilded brass fillet.

The crest is polished relief: the 'ailerons', each representing a caisson, are stamped at the base with nine gaudrons diminishing in size towards the rear. Small or not, each is separated by a palm, the detail depending upon the manufacturer. The base of each 'aileron' is folded back against the cap and cut out in four large segments closely attached to the cap by little square brass nuts on the inside.

The front plaque is similarly decorated to that of the trooper's helmet but the execution is far superior. The highly ornamental Imperial Crown is 61mm high and 42mm wide; the eagle being 69mm high by 57mm wide; while the lower extremity, bordered by a fluted fillet, represents two upward-rising palms.

The base of the crest or comb is covered by a plate generally engraved or chiselled with stars and a floral pattern and, at the front, a wreath of leaves from which a laurel branch breaks free. This part is exceptionally well crafted and always of beautiful quality. At the Empire's end, this plate is based and chiselled on whorls of foliage from which rhinoceros emerge, Testot-Ferry's being the prime example of this style. The two types of decoration were common within both the Guard and the Line, and the dragoons used them on their helmets in the same way as the cuirassiers.

Two types of tuft-holder exist. The first is exactly the same as a trooper's, except that it is better made. The second only varies in its base, decorated scales raised towards the bottom in the same manner with seven ranges of pearls and two interlacing serpents. The second type is later than the first, appearing in about 1812, but did not replace the earlier version and was worn by both line cuirassiers and guard and line dragoons.

The horsehair mane was formed in a long black queue. As stated in the first part of this article, towards the beginning of the Empire it streamed back from towards the front of the crest, cascading to either side of the helmet, but was gradually moved back and both the Lafosse and Dulac helmets have the mane right towards the back.

The helmet interior contained a band of leather sur-

Rear view of the helmet on the previous page showing the Bourbon decorations on the comb and the Restoration-style rosettes.

mounted by a black silk strip. Some helmets, such as Dulac's, have a band entirely of leather cut in eight wolf's teeth.

The plume of vulture feathers was mounted on whalebone and had a height of circa 520mm with a diameter of some 100mm at the summit — hardly practical, but there you go! Company officers had a red plume, higher ranks white. According to modern sources only, squadron leaders and guidon-bearers had a white plume with a red base (?).

According to contemporary sources, there was no uniformity among officers, each wishing to distinguish himself amongst his peers, if one believes the testimony of Marshal Bessieres writing to Arrighi de Casanova:

'... when his Majesty has decided upon a uniform, no-one has the right to change it; it seems to me that when he fixed the Dragoon uniform, he had decided upon a red plume. Let me know truthfully by whose order the regiment you command has adopted white plumes.'

The Colonel-Major of the Dragoons replied: 'Fantasy!'

The plume was protected while not being worn within a black polished taffeta case.

An olive pompon in the shape of a tulip embroidered with gold reeds is the greatest rarity among surviving helmets



mets, though. We know that the furnisher of the entire batch of helmets from 1806 to 1814 was the elder Boutrais, hat-maker, of the rue St Honoré, Paris. In a statement of 13 September 1806, he gives the following list of objects as the priority equipment bought by under-officers, dragoons and velites.

'793 decorated helmets: 69 under-officers, price of each 42Fr; 724 dragoons, price of each 30Fr.

'793 plumes: price of each 2.50Fr.'

By 1807 the price for officers' helmets had risen to 44Fr, for troopers to 32.50Fr and we have the price for trumpeter's helmets of 44.50Fr. These prices seem to have remained steady through 1808 but in 1813 we see the cost of a trooper's helmet up to 33Fr and a plume to 5Fr (10 February 1813).

The diversity of helmets under the First Empire explains why descriptions are fairly terse; it is also necessary to take into account campaign losses and replacements, the latter being done as quickly as the situation demanded. Whatever, in May 1812 the Guard Dragoons — who since the beginning of the Russian campaign had not had the time to put their dress regulations or armament into proper order — received in Moscow the sum of 100Fr for each of six companies; each company commander was supposed to use this to put into effect the most urgent repairs and replacements, on the spot where possible. One can easily understand the conditions under which these were done and the reasons why some contemporary makeshift arrangements appear suspect to modern eyes.

MI

## HIGHER OFFICERS

To our knowledge, none of the three successive colonels' helmets survive. That they would be of officer pattern is obvious, but the quality is difficult to judge. They would have been distinguished by a white heron's feather tuft. The artist Louis Lejeune shows, in a picture of the battle of Somosierra on 30 November 1808 (preserved in the Château de Versailles), a superior officer of Guard Dragoons — probably Arrighi de Casanova — wearing a helmet with such a tuft.

## PRODUCTION AND COST

The Model 1806 helmets lack any manufacturer's mark or hallmark. Officers' helmets were carried in transport boxes, troopers' in the wagons. We know of no document suggesting the existence of a helmet cover, although it is certainly probable that such existed, if only for camouflage! The archives concerning the Guard Dragoons do contain the exact numbers and prices of the hel-

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'Le Général baron Claude Testot-Ferry (1773-1856) mon trisaïeul', Robert Testot-Ferry in the review of the 10th anniversary of the Napoleonic Society.



Above Captain Châtry de Lafosse's helmet (Musée de l'Emperi).

Below Martinet print depicting an officer in full dress with a much taller plume than a trooper's (Bibliothèque Raoul Brunon).



Above right Captain Dulac's helmet worn at Waterloo (Musée de Bourges).

Right The helmet of Claude Testot-Ferry worn at the battle of Hannau in 1814 (Private Collection).



OUR VISION OF the American West is usually filled with gun-fighters, sheriffs, bawdy saloons, cowboys and John Wayne fighting the Indians off. Or, General Custer and the 7th US Cavalry being done in by Sitting Bull and his warriors. These events and people have inspired countless numbers of books, artwork and, especially, Hollywood 'cowboys & Indians' movies which have been part of our lives since early childhood. The impression often retained is that all was wilderness until about 1850. Then in came the US Cavalry (or the North-West Mounted Police in Canada), the settlers, the railways, the grain elevators. Everything was civilized, neat and proper by 1900.

Yet, for over 250 years before 1850, there were soldiers posted from the Gulf of Mexico on the Atlantic to the Gulf of California on the Pacific. Even more surprising were the tools of the trade of these strange soldiers: shields, lances, and the leather coats which earned them their nickname: *soldados de cuera* — the leather jacket soldiers.

# 'Leather Jacket Soldiers'

## The 'Cuera' cavalry of the American south-west (1)

RENE CHARTRAND

Paintings by DAVID RICKMAN

IN THIS FIRST article we examine the origins and fighting history of the Spanish 'Cuera' cavalry from the 16th to the 19th century. Part two will further examine their uniforms, weapons and equipment.

A steel morion with a rapier and in the background, a shirt of chain mail. The early presidial soldiers of the 16th century were equipped with such items, a few were still using them by the later part of the 17th century. (Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico.)



*A shirt of chain mail used in Mexico during the 16th century. Some presidial soldiers may have used such protective clothing until the 18th century. (Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico.)*



They served the king of Spain and their story is largely unknown. The Pilgrim Fathers of Massachusetts or the early colonists of Virginia continue to hold the prize as the 'first colonists' and to a certain extent this is correct for they laid the foundations of the 13 colonies which, in time, became the original states of the United States of America. As the American Republic marched westward, and especially as a result of the Mexican War of 1846-1848, a new dominion was joined to the US. A dominion that the Spanish had settled some 250 years earlier.

The territories ceded by Mexico were essentially the old Spanish *Provincias Internas* of northern 'New Spain' (as

Mexico was officially called before its independence in 1821). The *Provincias Internas* were the result of the gradual extension of the movement which had started with Hernando Cortez's epic conquest of Mexico from 1519. Military conquest was followed by a period of relative peace and stabilisation. Aztec Mexico became New Spain, ruled by a Viceroy who answered to the King of Spain and 'of the Indies'.

These northern provinces were hardy frontier areas which had been explored to some extent during the 1500s. Coronado was looking for the mythical seven cities of gold and Ponce de Leon failed to find the (still) elusive Fountain of Youth. Other soldiers and settlers followed in a slow but irrepressible expansion like an arc moving gradually across the broad plateau of northern Mexico. By the end of the 18th century, the border provinces were: Texas, Coahuila, New Mexico, New Vizcaya, Sonora and the Californias ('Baja California' is now a Mexican state and 'Alta California' is the American state).

As the Spaniards moved north, they encountered considerable resistance from more

"barbaric" Indians than the Aztecs — indeed, these northern tribes were also considered barbarians by the much more advanced Indian civilizations that had been vanquished by Cortez. These 'barbarians' — like modern guerrillas — used hit and run tactics; moving in small groups, raiding unsuspecting peaceful settlements in an orgy of massacre and destruction, leaving behind ashes and terror.

A change of Spanish tactics was necessary. These 'barbaric' Indians were not the massed Aztec armies bedecked with colourful plumes and gold ornaments which could be moved down by artillery and steel swords. The days were gone when horses scared the daylights out of Indian warriors; on the contrary, they were enthusiastic horsemen using them to their full potential for speed and ease of movement. To counter them, the Spanish evolved a type of fortified village or post called a *Presidio*. This appears to have had its origin in the Latin *praesidium* — meaning a garrisoned place. By about 1560 the word *Presidio* was found in the Spanish language in reference to such Spanish posts in North Africa. The first Mexican *Presidios*

were established during the 1570s to protect shipments from the silver mines between Zacatecas and Mexico City. A twenty year war with the Chichimeca Indians saw a multiplication of these forts as far up as Monterey (Mexico).

A Presidio was not much more than thick adobe wall with turrets and living quarters for men and beasts within. It was certainly not meant to repulse a European enemy with artillery. But it was an excellent fortification for what it was meant to do in its own, usually hostile, environment. It was the centre of a military command for an area, usually headed by a captain, with a number of soldiers, and the home of a number of dependants, settlers and Indians who had been converted to the everlasting mercy of Christ to counter the short-lived mercy of man.

This last aspect, the redeeming of the souls of the heathen Indians, was a prime consideration in Spanish colonial policy. The Spaniards put considerable effort, treasure, and sacrifice of a good many missionaries at the torture post in pursuit of this objective. The excesses against Indians during the early part of the 16th century gave rise to the 'Black Legend' in Protestant Europe; Spaniards were put in a stereotype of wicked cruelty against just about anyone — something which still survives in 'Pirate' movies. Reality is always more complicated; it was as a result of the Spanish reaction to the abuses in America that the slavery of Indians was forbidden by the King in 1542. There were many protestations from the settlers and this was not always followed to the letter. One of the resulting compromises was the importation of blacks from Africa to be slaves in America. But for Indians, it was possibly better to be in a Spanish colony than in lands administered by Portugal, England, Holland or France where enslavement of Indians was not forbidden (a handy thing to have around the house for the well-to-do in 18th century Montreal was a female Indian slave or two...).

The Spanish generally aimed to 'Christianize' and educate the Indians rather than eliminate them. This is all-important in understanding their approach to Indian warfare. To punish hostile Indians by military expeditions, yes. But to destroy them was not the objective. To the Spanish — a deeply religious people — saving the souls of these new people was important and explains

At the bottom, a 17th century bandolier for loading an arquebus which then armed the cuera soldiers and, above it, an 18th century cartridge box which was carried around the waist. (Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.)

why the monks, friars and priests were always close at hand. This was achieved relatively quickly in the sophisticated Aztec and Inca civilizations, and even in far less civilized areas such as the missions created by the Jesuits during the 17th and 18th centuries in Paraguay. Other areas of the

#### **Key to plates overleaf**

##### **Plate A**

**A1** The first cuera soldiers were likely to wear steel as well as leather for protection in the later part of the 16th and the early 17th centuries. Our figure is based on a 1597 inspection of the troops in the expedition to New Mexico headed by Juan de Oñate, the Lienzo de Tlaxcala paintings and various regulations. In the late 16th century, the mounted soldier in northern Mexico ideally had a helmet with bevor. When the helmet was not worn, the headgear would consist of a hat reinforced with steel bands. A coat of mail or layered buckskin was usually covered with a jerkin, also of layered leather, or else of quilted cotton. Buckskin breeches were considered necessary protection against arrows as was the shield of Moorish design, called an ardaga, made of several layers of rawhide. Also of Moorish inspiration were the saddle and the stirrups. The horse needed a complete armour of buckskin lined with rawhide, and with a steel chamfron. Our soldier carries a barbed lance called a runka and a shield but he could also be armed with an harquebus instead.

**A2** This figure, based on the hide painting of the 1720 Villasur expedition's disaster now in the Museum of New Mexico, shows that the presidial soldiers had, by then, adopted the main elements of their unique dress and equipment. The leather jacket was knee-length, conforming to the shape of contemporary men's coats, and of white leather. The colour of clothing could be any combination of red and blue for the coat, breeches and stockings. The weapons were the usual lances, swords and escopetas with leather ardagas for protection.



**A3** An Indian auxiliary warrior with the Spanish troops, also based on the hide painting of the 1720 Villasur expedition. The man's leather coat, the cuera, is identical to that of the Spanish soldiers but the buckskin shirt and leggings are of native style, as are the side-fastening Pueblo-style moccasins. Indian auxiliaries were armed with bows and arrows since the Spanish authorities did not favour arming any Indians with firearms.

##### **Plate B**

**B1** The 1772 regulations called for a blue short coat with red cuffs and collar which appear to have been a short-skirted affair with brass buttons. The cut is based on a 1771 illustration of a San Carlos militia dragoon. The black wide-brimmed hat had long been worn by the presidial soldiers and the protective and offensive weapons remained the same. A bandolier embroidered with the name of the soldier's Presidio was introduced by the 1772 regulations and complained of as useless by officers since it apparently held neither sword nor cartridge box. The boots worn by our figure are the regulation black side-laced botines but variety was possible. A 1779 inspection at San Antonio (Texas) tells us that buckskin botas were also worn (as well as red lapels on the coat).

**B2** During the 18th century the presidial soldiers were ordered to wear uniforms and did so, after a fashion. While it is obvious that there was great liberty with details on the frontier, the clothing was usually blue and red. This soldier's appearance is reconstructed from the description of the soldiers at the Presidio of Monclova in 1767. During that inspection, the men were reported in short

blue coats with scarlet cuffs and waistcoats and silver buttons. We have added blue breeches, though red or even buckskin was possible. The cut of the uniform and the sash at the waist are based on pictures of contemporary civilian dress in rural New Spain. Over his shoulder is a fine woven serape cloak woven in the town of Saltillo. The scarlet standard with the royal arms is based on a circa 1760 map of New Mexico by Bernardo de Meira y Pacheco.

**B3** A priest, Father Tirsch, has left some fine circa 1767 drawings of his time in Lower California now in the State Library in Prague. These include several drawings of presidial cavalry upon which this figure is based. Our soldier wears a white leather jacket with decorative stitching including a crown, shown in yellow, on the pocket. The jacket is shown as scarlet and one wonders if this was the uniform short jacket, which should have been blue, or the waistcoat for which scarlet would be correct. The breeches are blue which is what one would expect. Of course, any combination of red or blue appears to have been worn. The rawhide shield is white with decorative stitching and a yellow crown at the centre. The white drawers are allowed to show below the knee and our man wears leather botas instead of stockings. The saddle has two removable leather covers over the tree, the bottom most has iron jinglers, as does the anquera, the rump cover which is a vestige of the old horse armour (see plate A1). Cruciform iron stirrups were popular from the late 17th century, but forbidden by the 1772 regulations. The soldier's light musket, the escopeta, is carried in a leather case, called a funda, slung from the saddlehorn.







The doomed remnants of the 1720 Villasur expedition are depicted in their last stand armed with shields, swords, lances and carbines, wearing knee-length near-white leather jackets, wide brimmed hats edged with lace and jackets or waistcoats with blue or yellowish sleeves, the breeches and stockings being also shown in those colours now somewhat faded on this dramatic hide painting. With the attacking Indians are men wearing tricorn hats and coats, possibly meant to be French traders as no French troops were engaged. The painting was probably done by a Christian Indian based on accounts of survivors and is now in Santa Fé at the Palace of the Governors, Museum of New Mexico.

realm were not so quick in assimilating Christ and Iberian culture and the outer border areas of Chile and Argentina were replete with 'heathen' Indian tribes. But by far the most important area for such troubles was the vast expanse of the American south-west.

At first, a fierce military policy was practised to contain 'rebel' Indians but far-sighted officials could see that, apart from being expensive, this would not produce a lasting result. Eventually, if the fierce Chichimecas acquired a healthy respect for Spanish arms, what brought them over were peace offerings of manufactured items such as cloth and brass pans — the benefits of civilisation — and soon, Christianity, to benefit the soul. This scenario first brought out by Viceroy de Zúñiga, Marquis de Villanueva, during the 1580s saw many repetitions in the next century. The task for the Spanish soldiers posted on the borderlands north of Mexico was, by royal order, noted an Italian traveller in 1697, 'to do what they can not to kill them, but bring them back so they may be instructed in our Holy Religion'.

During the 17th century, the Spanish outpost approached the Rio Grande river and a spur went right up to Santa Fé (founded in 1610) in New Mexico. After a stubborn resistance, the Pueblo Indians were baptised and look to life around the missions as the century pro-

gressed. There were various revolts in northern Mexico which kept the soldiers busy but the worse came in New Mexico. All was not well with the neophyte Pueblo Indians who had contacts with the warlike and nomadic Indians. United, they rose in revolt during 1680. The uprising of both the Christian and the nomadic Indians destroyed the missions, settlements and *Presidios* in New Mexico. Many Spaniards and allied Indians of both sexes and all ages lost their lives — some after several days of torture. The terrorized survivors, afraid of such cruelty, fled their homes and ranches. It was impossible to contain the 'barbarian' Indians and after much fighting, New Mexico was evacuated. But in 1692, the Spanish came back in force and the province was reconquered by Don Diego de Vargas who then became governor, taking his quarters in Santa Fé.

With this campaign came to an end the last of the few large-scale revolts since the days of Cortez. The Pueblo revolt, the most important of the 17th century, brought new tactical lessons to the Spaniards facing the vast plains to the north. Fighting such Indians as the Apaches, the Navahoes and the Comanche required more mobility. Increasingly, detachments of Spanish *cuera* cavalry were patrolling the borderlands using their *Presidios* as bases to keep an eye on any intruders who would try to slip into

Mexico. The Indians too had to change tactics. Obviously, the Spanish were there to stay but there could still be plenty of booty and horses to be gotten by surprise 'guerrilla' attacks on isolated ranches, missions and *Presidios*. Such would be the usual pattern of warfare in the south-west for the next century and a half: patrols of cavalry versus the elusive 'barbarians' trying to slip through. There were a few disasters, the worst probably being the extermination of the Villasur expedition in 1720 when the imprudent Spanish commander went very far north-east of Santa Fé apparently seeking the French in Illinois and was overwhelmed by Indians allied to the French, possibly with the help of French traders in present-day Nebraska. But even such a reverse had no strategic effect. The 'line' of frontier forts, missions and settlements grew steadily in population and in strength.

It has sometimes been concluded that the Spanish failed in their attempts to eliminate the Indian 'problem' since the Apaches were always active and many did slip south across the Rio Grande. To be sure, the Spanish Viceroys would have been happy if the problematic Indians had never existed, but they did exist, and the challenge was to contain them and bring to them the word of God. The 'Internal Provinces' were a buffer zone to absorb such raids in order to protect Mexico itself.

The line of *Presidios* was not intended to be hermetic like the great wall of China but rather to be used as bases for patrolling soldiers and the protection of settlers and missionaries. And there were more soldiers and militias south of this line to intercept or pursue the marauding Indians. We suspect very few raiders ever got to Mexico and lived to tell about it. Viewed in that sense, there is no doubt that the defence of northern New Spain was a great success since the all-essential objective of the Spanish Court, the safety of Mexico, was achieved.

Indians were not the only reason why *Presidios* and far-away provinces were settled. They were also used to curb the territorial ambitions, real or imaginary, of other powers. The brief French appearance in Texas from 1685 to 1687 soon brought the Spanish there on a more permanent basis and, by the early 18th century, the *Presidio* of Las Adas marked the effective border with the French in nearby Fort Natchitoches, Louisiana. Apart from the short (and rather curious) war between France and Spain from 1718 to 1720, relations were generally good between fellow Bourbons on the thrones of both countries. Louisiana was eventually ceded to Spain in 1763 in compensation for the loss of Florida to the British. Texas became again a buffer province after 1803 as a result of the Louisiana purchase by the United States.

In the 1760s, word came to Mexico City that the Russians were moving southward from Alaska. Viceroy De Croix reacted by sending expeditions north and San Diego was estab-

lished in 1769. By 1776, the soldiers, settlers and missionaries were up to San Francisco. Thus began the colonisation of California, now the state with the largest population and the most important economy in the United States.

In spite of their rôle as buffers to the hostile Indians and other possible intruders, the settlement of the various *Provincias Internas* steadily increased. By 1764, the population was about 233,000 souls, half of them Indians who lived in villages and missions, the rest being Spaniards, creoles (Spaniards born in the colonies) and mixed blood (Spanish and Indian). Less than half a century later, in 1803, the population had more than doubled and was reckoned at 559,600 souls. With such results in colonisation, it is difficult to understand the alleged 'failure' of the Spanish soldiers. Indeed, these figures could be used to demonstrate success. The 'barbarian' Indians certainly inflicted serious damages, one of the worst examples being the province of New Vizcaya which reported in 1776 that it had suffered 1,674 persons killed, 154 captured, 116 *haciendas* abandoned and nearly 70,000 head of cattle lost since 1771. But this province probably had over 125,000 settlers at that time which brings these 'catastrophic' figures into a more realistic context. This brought punitive military expeditions onto the plains to the Indians, the one of 1778-1780 led by Juan Bautista de Anza being especially successful.

The numeric strength of these frontier soldiers was never very great when one considers the enormous expanses they were to patrol — from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The first five *Presidios* established in the 1570s only had 'companies' of six men each but these probably were considered somewhat like mounted medieval men-at-arms. A decade later, more had been learned about the sort of cavalry needed and there were now 30 *Presidios* with an average of 14 men each making about 420 mounted men. The number of *Presidios* varied greatly during the 17th century but the companies grew to about 30 men each and, by the 1690s, the establishment stood at about 600 cavalrymen. The 18th century saw considerable increases in the strength of these troops. In 1701, there were 15 companies with a total of 562 troops. In 1729, 19 companies totalling 734 men. In 1764, 23 companies making

1,271. In 1777, there were 1,907 soldiers and 280 Indian scouts which maintained a herd of over 14,000 horses and 1,700 mules for their service. In 1783, the number of soldiers in the 'Internal provinces' spread in 22 *Presidios* was 2,840 which increased to 3,087 by 1787 (in 24 *Presidios*) and remained thereafter fairly stable into the first decade of the 19th century with 3,030 reported in 1803.

Presidial cavalrymen led a considerably different life from that of other 'ordinary' cavalry soldiers. They were far from the large centres of colonial civilization they were defending. In 1772, they had by regulation not one but half a dozen horses per man beside a colt and a mule, which gives an idea of the hardships of their long patrols into the wilderness as well as their prowess as horsemen. Their enemies were not the polite foes of the 'lance wars' in Europe but ferocious warriors who, if one was unfortunate enough to be captured by them, might end one's life very slowly in an orgy of horrible tortures which no soldier in Europe would even wish to have nightmares about — yet these were daily perils to the tough *cuera* soldiers. As a result of their isolation, they had little of the formal training and discipline known in Europe, a situation deplored by the inspecting officers from the Spanish army; yet many admired their stamina and bravery.

In the 18th century, most of the *cuera* soldiers were natives of the *Provincias Internas*. Many of them — about half in the 1780s — were 'criollos' (white men of Spanish ancestry born in New Spain) with a few from Spain or 'Europe'. About a third were of 'mixed blood', mostly Indian and Spanish with a few just 'Indian'. The rest had varying degrees of Indian, Spanish and African blood in their veins. There was a tendency to have more 'criollo' soldiers in the eastern provinces and less in the centre and to the west. Enlistment was for ten years and one had to be a Roman Catholic and understand the duties and punishments of the military code. Less than 15% knew how to read and write and those who could were often from Spain and would likely become NCOs. Pay was relatively good but the men saw very little of it in cash. They were deducted for all sorts of supplies which had to come at great expense from Mexico... and there was often a swindling officer keeping the store



A leather shield or ardagia as used by presidial troops into the 19th century.

ledgers. Under the 1772 regulations a company would have 40 soldiers (in fact this varied greatly — in 1787 there were, for instance, 94 in San Antonio [Texas], 120 in Santa Fé [New Mexico], 73 in Tucson [now Arizona], and 33 in San Francisco [California]). They were paid 290 pesos per year each, two corporals had 300 pesos each, a sergeant had 360 pesos, a chaplain had 480 pesos, an ensign had 500 pesos, a lieutenant had 700 pesos and a captain had 3,000 pesos. Except for the captain, one can see that there was not, in these troops, the enormous gulf one usually sees between the financial worth of a private and that of a lieutenant. This is revealing and appears to indicate that some social barriers were not as rigid as in Europe or in the more urbanised parts of colonial societies. It was not unusual to find that a Captain had started out as an enlisted man in the *cuera* cavalry and nearly all junior officers rose through the ranks. A few, such as Anza, reached field rank but the higher grades were usually filled by officers from Spain.

As in other types of forces, there were injustices with regard to pay, especially in the last years of Spanish rule and the Mexican period. José María Amador, a *cuera* soldier in California, recalled that his father had served 47 years in the presidial cavalry rising from private to ensign but never received his pension from the

time of his retirement in about 1798 to his death in 1825 so that his son had to support him. A Russian navy officer travelling in California noted in 1815 that the troops had not been paid for seven years. It is a wonder they served at all, especially since discipline could be quite strict under the old Spanish military code, even for grumbling. In California, at least, it would appear it was applied.

Up to 1776, the 'Internal Provinces' were under the direct authority of the Viceroy of Mexico, but thereafter they were set up as an independent and separate Commandancy General for better management. But this meant little change for the soldiers. The *cuera* cavalry carried on with basically the same organization and duties. The independence of Mexico in 1821 did not mean much change at first but the increasing influx of Americans into Texas eventually led to its independence in 1836. The war between Mexico and the United States between 1846 and 1848 sealed the fate of the old *Provincias Internas*, part of which became American territories. As for the presidial troops, they were ordered disbanded by Mexico on 1 December 1847 bringing to an end, after nearly three centuries, a proud and unique military corps.

# The 15th or King's Light Dragoons (Hussars) (1)

NEIL LEONARD

IN THE FIRST part of this series on the painstaking task of reconstructing the uniforms and equipment of England's first Hussar regiment at the time of the Napoleonic Wars, the author takes the story up to its conversion from light dragoon to hussar status in 1805-1806.

## INTRODUCTION

THE PROJECT EMBARKED upon to re-create the 15th or King's Light Dragoons

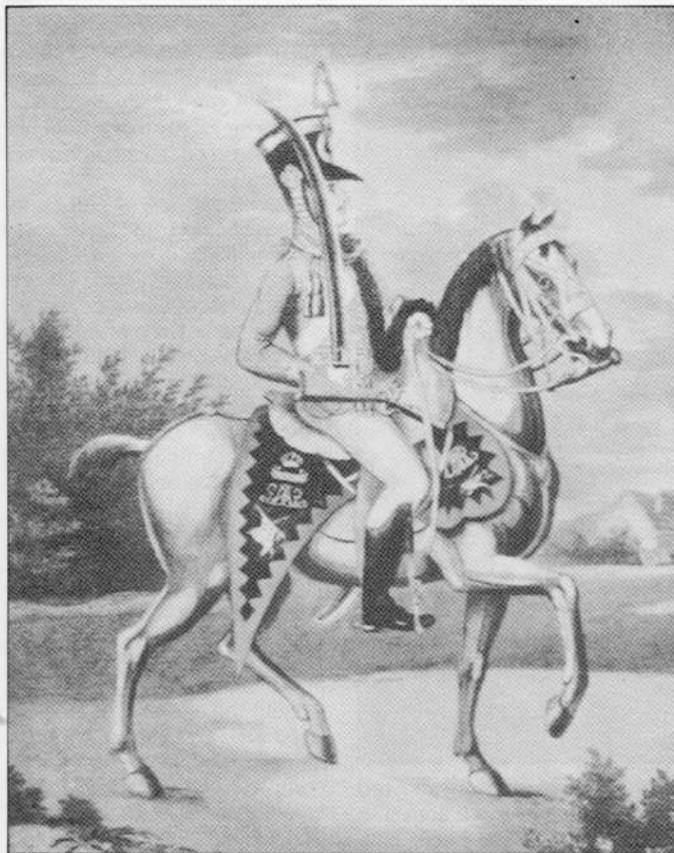
(Hussars) has been a fairly long and enjoyable one, which would not have been at all possible without the great help received from the current

Newcastle upon Tyne. I would like to express my thanks to Ralph for his patience and kind help in allowing us to remove items from display cases for measurement purposes, and for access to the non-display stores of the museum.

The first part of the article will take a look at the history of the regiment from a fairly wide perspective from its first dawn-

*A reconstruction of the full dress uniform of the private circa 1808. The tall cylindrical busby measures 12in high and was made of brown fur covering a pasteboard cylinder, without an iron hoop as mentioned by Lieutenant Adjutant Jones, which he blamed for the wound to his face, as a blow from a sabre cut right through his cap.*





Coloured aquatint of a trooper of the 15th Hussars circa 1805 showing the black felt shako which replaced the tall cylindrical busby in undress and to save the more delicate busby from wear and tear.  
(15th/19th Hussars Museum.)

ings up until the disastrous Corunna campaign; it will also track the changes in the dress of the Regiment from the point of view of the private soldier, and N.C.O. from the time when the continental idea of the Hussar first became fashionable in Britain up until 1815 and the end of the Napoleonic wars. Subsequent parts of the article will consider the Peninsula Campaign itself, saddlery, weapons and equipment in detail and the uniform of the officers.

Unlike continental Europe, cavalry re-enactment in the UK from the Napoleonic point of view is still very much in its infancy with small numbers and only two units, and although there have been some stout-hearted attempts to bring it to fruition they have not yet met with the success that they deserve for their efforts, as anyone with any knowledge of cavalry re-enactment will agree; that to bring to the field only a small number of well horsed, authentically uniformed and saddled troopers is not only extremely expensive, but also requires Herculean efforts and hard work with regard to training, safety, logis-

tics, drill and something that only time and constant practice can gain, experience, for without the last of the ingredients, as I've learned from my own experiences, it cannot and does not work.

That experience in the case of the 15th Hussars comes from the members of Alan Larsen's 'The Troop' which is a multi-period riding group with members in some cases having over 20 years' riding experience in battle re-enactment situations, and counts among its members professional riders who do work for films and TV advertising. The Troop has put on consistently high standards of horsemanship at numerous Napoleonic Association events over the past two years as Polish Lancers of the Vistula Legion, and that experience will now be drawn upon to form a second troop in addition to the Lancers: The 15th or King's Light Dragoons (Hussars).

### HISTORY

The 15th or King's Own Light Dragoons (Hussars) is the title which the regiment fought under during the Napoleonic Wars, a rather long-winded title but one with a long and honourable history behind it. The regiment was originally raised by Major-General George Augustus Elliott in March 1759, one of seven new cavalry regiments raised during that year, as a result of Britain's involve-

ment in the Seven Years' War. The regiment was originally known as Elliott's Light Horse, bearing the number 15 in relation to its precedence on the Army List.

The 15th, however, was different from the rest of the regiments being raised that year, as it was the first to consist entirely of light troops. There had been earlier attempts to raise light cavalry after the continental style by the attachment of light companies to some of the dragoon regiments, but the 15th was the first full regiment of light cavalry. The 15th was quickly followed by the 16th and 17th Regiments, all unofficially termed Hussars following the immensely successful Hungarian and Prussian models then in service.

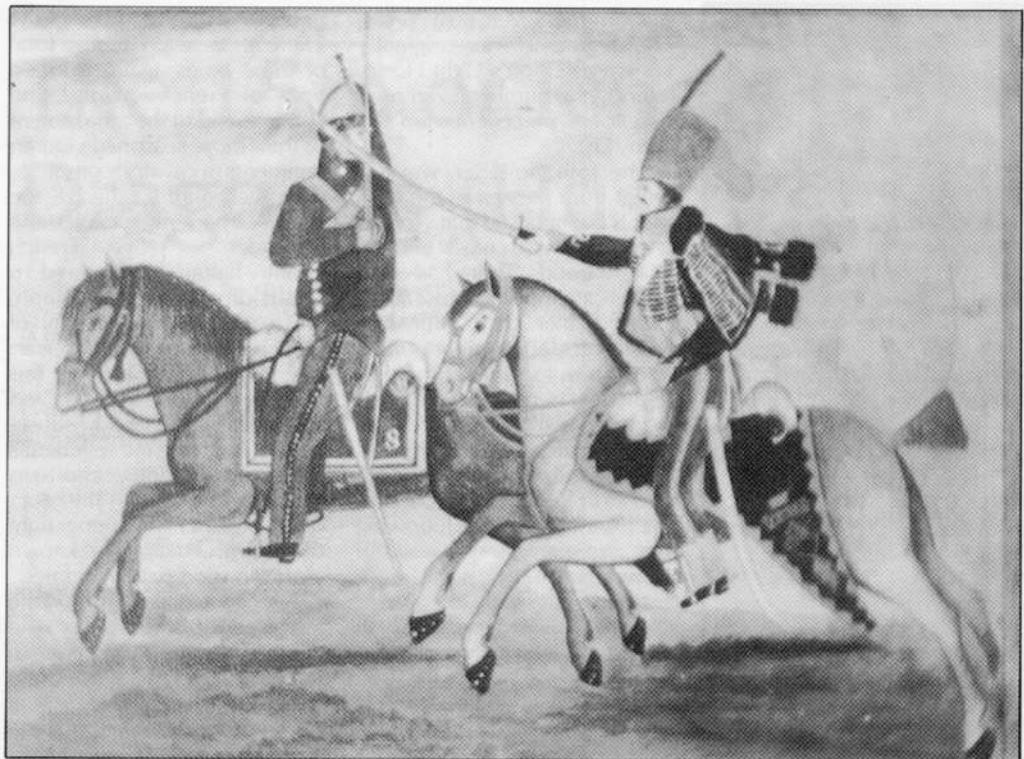
In 1760 Britain was an ally of the Prussian King Frederick the Great, having entered an alliance with Prussia in response to the French invasion of Hanover. In July 1760 a total of seven cavalry regiments was sent to Germany to reinforce the British Army already in Hanover. Amongst these regiments was the newly raised 15th Light Horse. Only three days after disembarkation, with horses still not in the best of condition after the crossing from Britain, the 15th received its first taste of glory, at the

Battle of Emsdorf on 16 July. The 15th were to charge a total of three times against formed lines of French infantry and cannon, and to the amazement of their more seasoned veteran regiments of cavalry, completely routed and scattered the French. The 15th accepted the surrender of five French infantry battalions, captured 16 stands of colours, six cannon, and made over two thousand of the French prisoners of war. The losses of the 15th on this glorious day were 125 men and 168 horses. This action subsequently became the regiment's first battle honour, and was later emblazoned on their lacquered leather and copper light dragoon helmets, later known as the Emsdorf pattern helmet.

After the battle of Emsdorf the 15th had to withdraw from the campaign for a short time, so badly had they been cut up in the charges that they were sent back to Hanover to refit and reorganise. After this brief respite the regiment was again involved in a cavalry action at Kloster Kampen in October,

*The original head-dress of the 15th or Elliot's Light Horse, later emblazoned with Bourbon flags and bearing an inscription running around its rim referring to the regiment's bold action at Emsdorf.  
(15th/19th Hussars Museum.)*





Watercolour by Henry Collins circa 1811 showing a private of the 15th Hussars attacking a French dragoon. Note the figure 8 on the dragoon's shabraque, the 15th private's grey overalls rather than blue, as mentioned in the regimental orders. Note also the red serge lining to his pelisse.

covering the retreat of the British Army. The regiment charged against overwhelming numbers of Frenchmen, and by their valour saved the retreat turning into a rout.

In 1765 the 15th were reviewed by George III at Hyde Park, and after the inspection was completed he conferred upon them the title The 15th or King's Light Dragoons. After the Seven Years' War was over, the 15th were not to see any action for a considerable period of time, taking no part in the American War of Independence, as the light cavalry role was filled by irregulars.

However, in 1793 Britain was again involved in war with Revolutionary France, and during that year, along with her allies, had assembled a small force in the Low Countries. At a place known as Villeurs En Cauchies two squadrons of the 15th were involved in an engagement with the French and charged into battle in conjunction with two squadrons of Austrian Hussars. Before the charge took place troopers from both regiments shook hands and swore to charge home together. The advance began and broke into a charge, when suddenly the cavalry for-

mation to their front wheeled to the left, revealing a large line of cannon. As the 15th and the Austrians charged home they scattered the gunners in all directions, putting them to the sword and sabre without mercy. The momentum of the charge continued and plunged on into six battalions of infantry formed in square, which were scattered and cut down with terrible losses. This mass of fleeing infantry intermingled with cavalrymen slashing left and right smashed into a group of French cavalry which had formed to the rear of the infantry squares; this cavalry was also dispersed by the 15th who chased them from the field for a distance of over four miles. After this brilliant charge the troopers of the 15th had to cut their way back to their own lines, back through the infantry they had earlier dispersed which had re-formed in the rear of the cavalrymen.

As an honour to the regiment the officers of the 15th were granted the right to wear Austrian-pattern Royal Lace on their uniforms, an honour that the regiment still holds to this day, the Austrian-pattern lace being worn on ceremonial uniforms, officers' full dress and NCO chevrons.

Although unofficially termed Hussars right from the formation of the regiment, and trained along the continental lines as light cavalry, the official conversion from light dragoon status to Hussar did not come about until 1805. Horse Guards — the Ministry of Defence of the day — was ever

conservative and only allowed the title Hussar to be added in brackets; ie, the regiment now became known as 'The 15th or King's Own Light Dragoons (Hussars)' along with two other regiments, the 7th and 10th.

Very little change in dress was required at first as at this time all light dragoon regiments wore the dolman and tarleton helmet, but the newly converted regiments quickly adopted the tall muff-like brown fur busby which was a 12in cylinder with a red cloth bag, which emerged from the top to hang on either side or rear of the headdress. A small white over red tuft was attached to the front for the men, with cut feathers for the officers. It was also worn with yellow cap lines

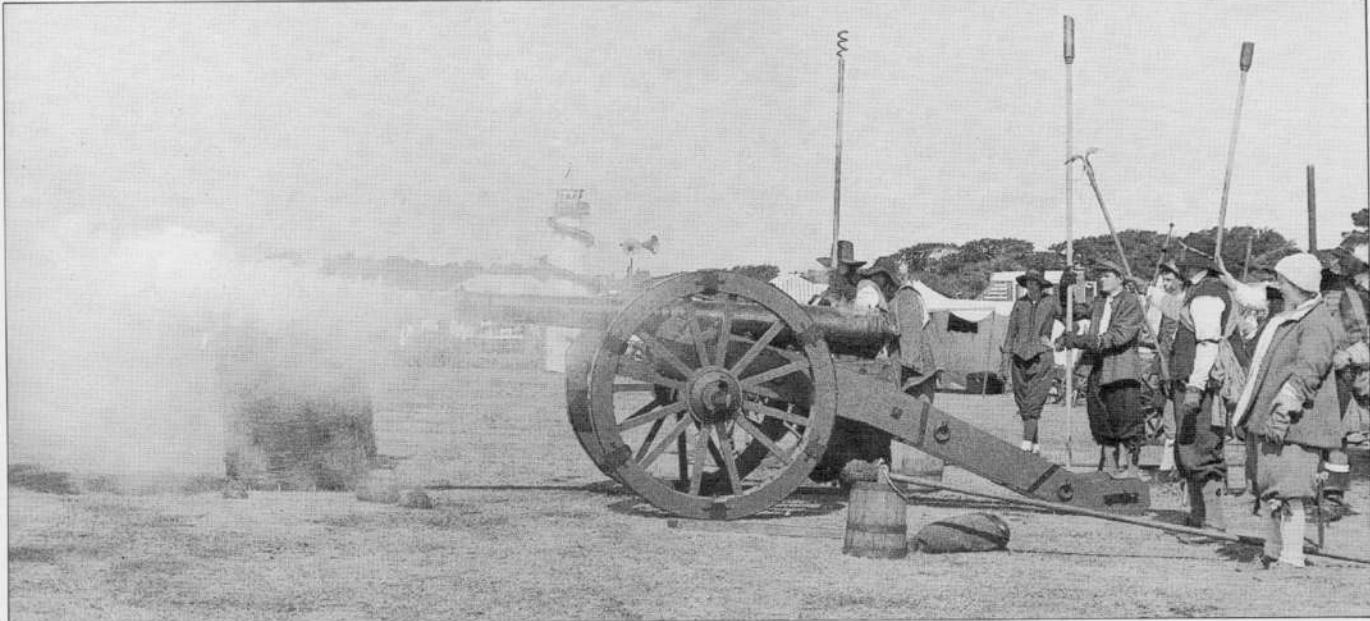
which passed twice around the busby and hung suspended from the right-hand side. These cap lines were really needed to secure the busby to the uniform when worn on horseback, as no chinscales had been issued at this period. It seems at least in the case of the 15th that in addition to the busby they were issued a black felt shako, worn for undress occasions, and to help preserve the more delicate busby. It is believed at least up to 1807 that the 7th Hussars even wore the continental *flügelmütze* cap with long flowing flamme of coloured cloth, the cap being basically a cylindrical shako. In common with their continental namesakes the British Hussars were ordered to wear moustaches, while at this period they would also have worn their hair in the queues which were eventually abolished in 1808.

With the addition of the barreled sash and the fur-trimmed pelisse, the Hussar look was complete. An order dated December 1806 gives instruction to the men to wear blue overalls when out of barracks and white breeches when in; these blue overalls seem to have been replaced by the time of the Corunna campaign, as a painting from that period indicates.

M1

*Captain Alexander Gordon, 15th Hussars circa 1809. He served throughout the Corunna campaign and left a fascinating account of his exploits. The journal has recently been republished by Colin Worley of Worley publications. (Photo from the original copy of the journal of Alexander Gordon, by kind permission of Colin Worley.)*





# Artillery at Edgehill, 1642

FEW BODIES in military history can have had as bad a write up in terms of efficiency and usefulness as artillery in the English Civil War. According to Brigadier Peter Young: 'Canon were most useful in siege work but counted little in battles. Their slow rate of fire... meant that there would have to be a great concentration to cause a decisive number of casualties. However, canon did not exist in great numbers in England at that time... The equipment was heavy and expensive.'

According to C.H. Firth, the English were slow to appreciate the importance of artillery,

THE EFFECTIVENESS of artillery during the 'English' Civil Wars is usually dismissed, but as this article shows the King's Army must have suffered significant casualties as it moved down the hill onto the deployed Parliamentarian guns.

guns were loaded slowly and dangerously from open powder barrels, and guns were frequently ineffective in battles including Edgehill where, despite brief successes in the opening bombardment, in the rest of the battle it played 'a very unimportant part.'

Nonetheless, 17th century soldiers were impressed by what they called the 'furie of the ordnance', large sums were spent gathering 'trains' of artillery and contemporary pamphlets usually include the number of guns captured or lost as one of the most important

**Above:**  
Royal Armouries 'Saker' firing, 1989. Perhaps the most accurate of modern reproductions, the 'Saker' is shown here with a good selection of the gunners' tools of the trade. These are, from left to right: a 'worm' for cleaning out debris and hooking out an unfired charge; a powder ladle which could either load a cartridge or loose powder; a linstock for the burning match, and a rammer. Foreground are a bucket and sponge and to the left of the gun a 'gabion' or wicker basket filled with earth intended to provide cover. If the gun were loaded with a full charge and ball the recoil would be considerable and the crew would not stand around behind it so casually. A 'Saker' would normally fire a ball of about 6 lb. By the Civil War guns actually called '6 pdrs' were being made.



**Left and following pages:**  
The following series of photographs demonstrate the loading and firing procedure by 'Captain Hazzard's Company' of the English Civil War Society. With thanks to Roger Emmerson and his crew.

Loading a paper cartridge with the aid of a ladle. In the words of Peter Whitehorne, writing in the middle 16th century, cartridges were intended for the 'more speedie shooting of ordinance'. Most if not all Civil War field guns would have been loaded with cartridges. It was also a safer and more accurate system with less chance for spillage or accident.



**Above:**  
Checking the bore diameter by means of a gunner's rule. Most gunners would have known both the bore diameter of the piece and the shot weight in pounds by 1642 but in the

event of capturing a gun or a suspect batch of shot it was wise to check. The gunner's rule was a very handy piece of equipment doubling as a sight, calipers and ruler.



**Above:**  
Offering up the ball prior to ramming home. Notice the shot gauge; different balls of varying weight could be checked by their ability to pass through the holes.

**Below:**  
Ramming home a grass wad, especially useful if the gun were to be fired level or pointing slightly downhill!



battle statistics. Cromwell, Waller, Hopton and all the most successful Civil War generals took considerable pains to see that they had adequate supplies of artillery and they were too practical to have wasted their resources on something which was useless. Clearly the popular view of artillery in the Civil War and especially at Edgehill is in need of revision.

One problem which has so far bedevilled research is the use that has been made of the available sources. The best modern commentators on the Civil War, Young, Roy, Hutton and others, have all concentrated on the Royalists yet the Royalist artillery of 1642-6 was most unusual both in terms of organisation and equipment. Since before the Armada it had been English policy to produce her own artillery, almost exclusively in the foundries of the Weald of Kent and Sussex, and to administer its issue, setting



Using a 'reamer' or vent pricker to pierce a hole in the cartridge and ensure that the vent is clear.



Priming with powder from a large powder horn. Notice here the wooden wedge or 'coin' which would be pushed in or pulled out to adjust elevation prior to the widespread use of screw elevators.

up and storage through the Ordnance Office at the Tower of London. When the King abandoned London he abandoned most of his artillery, all usual procedures and organisations and the major source of supply. Since Parliament had control of the navy it made importation of guns for the King very difficult, and what the Royalist leaders managed to cobble together with the aid of Sir John Heydon and other officials who fled the city was a strange amalgam of foreign guns and older pieces which remained in forts, ships and noble armouries, plus whatever

could be captured.<sup>1</sup>

The Royalist 'train' for the campaign of the autumn of 1642 (part of which was already gathered at Shrewsbury under cover of being sent to Ireland) consisted of 14 field guns six 'fawcons', six 'fawconnets' and two 'rabonetts' whilst the six siege pieces were two each of demi-canon, culverin and demi-culverin. These strange names were largely 16th century in origin and rather inexact in meaning, probably reflecting the fact that few if any Royalist guns were exactly identical to each other.

The Parliamentarian 'train'

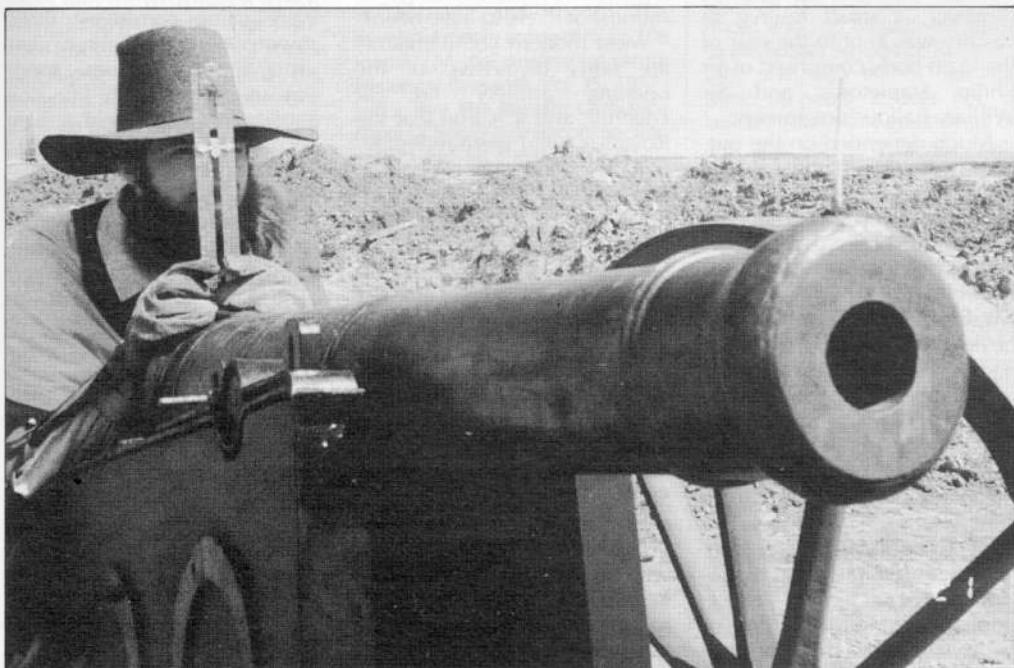
assembled by Philibert Emanuel du Boys, Controller of the Ordnance, was very different, consisting of 29 pieces of which 21 were modern field pieces. These were listed by weight of shot as two long and four short 12 pdrs, four 6 pdrs and 11 'short drakes' 3 pdrs.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the personnel for the 'trains' are identifiable. On the Parliamentarian side under Du Boys were 35 named officers, the most important of whom were the 'master gunner', Lancelot Honiburne, and the 'battery master', Christopher Troughton. There were also 18 'gentlemen of the ordnance'

and a guard of 100 'firelocks'. These last were particularly suited to guarding artillery because their firelocks used flints rather than a dangerous burning match to fire their weapons.

The Royalists were commanded by the Lieutenant of the Ordnance, Sir John Heydon, although for the time being the Earl of Newport retained the title 'Master of the Ordnance' and Heydon was aided in his organisation and procurement by a body known as the 'artillery commissioners', Sir John Pennington, Sir Bryan Palms, Sir George Strode and

Taking aim using the gunner's rule and a 'dispart'. Since guns were generally thicker at the breech than at the muzzle, simply sighting 'along the metal' was not always an accurate way to proceed. The 'dispart' or straw pushed into a little mud therefore served as a foresight, elevation being read off a movable scale on the rule. Printed tables for different gun sizes allowed the gunner a good guide for range at different elevations. Elevations could be checked using a 'quadrant', a device rather like a protractor with a plumb bob attached, but since targets were usually regiments or brigades extreme accuracy was seldom necessary.





John Wandesford.

To take Brigadier Peter Young's *Edgehill* at face value would be to believe that the Royalist artillery was expertly organised and managed whilst the Parliamentarians were poorly organised and inefficient. The Parliamentarian *Exact and True Relation* of the battle does indeed blame Du Boys for 'want of draught horses' and other 'omissions' in not keeping up with the main army but this is really the only documentary source and it is noticeable that the Earl of Essex did not himself put his hand to the 'Exact' relation. In fact Du Boys did tolerably well to get 16 field guns into the battle, especially given the fact that Royalist sympathisers remained in control of the office of the ordnance until August 1642.<sup>1</sup> That 16 was the number of Parliamentarian guns in the battle can be deduced from the fact that six of the original 29 pieces in the train were mortars, and that seven guns failed to make the field on 23 October. This leaves seven pieces, in all probability the lightest.

When the Royalists drew up on Edgehill on 23 October they followed conventional wisdom of the time in deploying their infantry in the centre in two major lines and the cavalry to the flanks. The field artillery was placed along the front with the heavier artillery to the right and rear of the main formation. According to Lord Belasyse's secretary Joshua Moone 'before

every body of foot were placed two pieces of cannon'. This initial deployment appears to have been complete by the early afternoon, with the guns being last to move into position. The Parliamentarians were now at Kineton and, hearing of the Royalists' presence as they prepared for divine service, were hurried off in the direction of the hill. Hampden's regiment and seven guns, probably the siege guns, lagged behind. The rest of the army formed up at the foot of the hill, like the Royalists with the bulk of their infantry in the centre and the cavalry on the flanks and field guns to the front. Unlike the Royalists, however, a small reserve of cavalry was kept to the rear of the main body comprised of Sir Philip Stapleton's and Sir William Balfour's regiments.

Much depended on the outcome of the battle: if the Royalists could win they stood a good chance of reaching London and putting a quick end to 'the rebellion'. If Parliament could win the King's main army would be defeated and it would be doubtful whether the 'malcontents' could carry on the war. Remarkably, the King's army threw away its tactical advantage of being uphill of its opponents and was marched down the slope. Worse, the King's generals began to argue. The Lord General Robert Beatie, Earl of Linsey, favoured a simple deep 'Dutch' style formation. Patrick Ruthven, Earl of Forth, was in favour of the new

'Swedish' method. This involved drawing out each brigade into four smaller units, each with a block of pikemen and several smaller blocks of musketeers.<sup>2</sup>

According to the young Duke of York, it was Ruthven who received the final order to deploy and Linsey, 'much displeased' flounced off to command his own regiment.

The Earl of Essex should perhaps have taken advantage of the descent and the indecision to launch his own attack, but for whatever reason his only riposte was to commence the opening canonade. Just how effective is this exchange of roundshot likely to have been?

Most modern commentators are fairly dismissive of the opening artillery fire at Edgehill, and it is true that the Royalists, who were redeploying their field guns downhill, would probably have had a limited effect which is very difficult to calculate. Conversely, contemporary accounts suggest that the lapse between the start of the bombardment and the cavalry coming to blows was anything up to an hour, the time given by Edmund Ludlow. At least three Royalist officers were killed, Lieutenant Francis Bowles of Fielding's regiment, Sir Richard Bulstrode, a quartermaster in the Duke of York's troop, and Captain Kingsmill who appears on the memorial in Radway church; since three officers were killed it is likely that others were wounded, and

*The moment of 'giving fire'. The vent is touched with a lighted match held in a linstock which immediately ignites the priming powder; this in turn will set off the main charge.*

it is also likely that many more of the humble soldiery also became casualties — although not newsworthy ones. It seems therefore that the Parliamentarian artillery was quite effective given that it is probable 16 Parliamentarian guns were firing for half an hour so they can scarcely have fired less than 150 rounds. Since we know that both sides were using cartridges, three minutes per shot is a very generous allocation of time; modern re-enactors can fire one shot from a light field gun in seconds.

This squares well with eyewitness evidence that the Parliamentarian guns found their mark. In the words of one anonymous Royalist observer: 'The King had so great an advantage of the hill that it turned to his disadvantage for being so much upon the descent that his canon either overshot, or if short it would not graze by reason of the ploughed lands whereas their canon did some hurt having a mark they could not miss.'<sup>3</sup>

It should be explained that the roundshot has its most devastating effect when fired as near parallel to hard flat ground as possible which results in

numerous dangerous 'bounces' or 'grazes' through the target and least loss of momentum. Conversely, firing downwards into ploughed or soft ground is likely to have the opposite effect with fewer 'bounces' and the ball spending little time in the vital space between ground level and head height.

Whatever real or imagined advantages the Royalist artillery train possessed were now completely thrown away as the army advanced to attack. Perhaps this was the best policy with troops which were largely inexperienced but it may also be true that advancing to contact was seen as the best way to avoid standing in the face of effective fire.

The indecisive struggle which followed has been well documented. Rupert routed the cavalry of Ramsay and Wilmot dealt similarly with the much outnumbered troops of Fielding's regiment. Most of the Royalist cavalry enjoyed the pursuit as far as Kineton and were thus of little further use to the battle. The two main bodies of infantry now closed upon one another.

The part played by the artillery was not yet over. Parliament still had some cavalry in the shape of Sir Philip Stapleton's and Sir William Balfour's regiments and these now managed to break through the Royalist centre towards the heavy guns. According to the Parliamentarian 'official' account, Balfour broke 'a regiment of foot which had green colours, beat them to their cannon, where they threw down their Arms and ran away, he laid his hand upon the cannon and called for nails to nail them up, especially the two biggest which were Demy-Cannon, but finding none he cut the ropes belonging to them, and his troopers killed the canoneers, then he pursued the fliers half a mile upon execution.'<sup>10</sup>

Royalist returns show the expenditure of 16 rounds of heavy 'case' shot, murderous containers of musket balls, so Balfour may not have had everything his own way.<sup>10</sup> His failure to 'nail up' or 'spike' the touch holes of the cannon may also have allowed the enemy guns to come back into action later.

On returning to their own lines, Stapleton's men discovered that some of the artillery here were unmanned and unprotected. Young suggests that the gunners had simply run away. The cavalry now dismounted and fired one of the guns with case shot at some horsemen coming towards

them; luckily only one was wounded for these were Balfour's regiment returning.

By the early evening both sides were fought to a standstill. Colonel John Hampden came up to reinforce the Earl of Essex at Kineton and the King's army retired up Edgehill. The Royalists succeeded in taking seven guns with them. Of these Sir Robert Walsh claimed to have taken two during a cavalry charge and three more were taken by Sir John Smith from the field the next day from under the noses of the Parliamentarians whilst the Royalist army looked on 'with wonder and applause'. The Duke of York noted that six of the enemy's guns and 'some' artillery belonging to the King had been left during the night on the field in the keeping of neither army.<sup>11</sup>

So ended one of the most important battles on English soil; 1,500 men lay dead but although the Parliamentarians withdrew towards Warwick on 23 October, neither side could convincingly claim victory. Artillery had played its part in the campaign and but for the unsophisticated tactics and blunders of both sides it might have done more. It is certainly true that the artillery of both sides was more evenly matched and more useful than has hitherto been given credit. **MI**

#### Notes

- 1Peter Young and Wilfrid Emberton, *The Cavalier Army*, London 1974 pp27-28.
- 2C.H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, London 1902, pp145-162.
- 3As is explained in S. Bull, *The Fury of Ordnance*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales 1988, pp324-494.
- 4See Public Record Office WO 55/387, 457 and Young, 'The Royalist Artillery at Edgehill' in *The Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research*, Vol 35, 1957, and I. Roy *The Royalist Ordnance Papers*, Oxfordshire Record Society vols 43 and 44, 1964 and 1975.
- 5P. Young *Edgehill*, Kineton 1967, also Bull *op cit* pp324-338.
- 6See William Barriffe, *The Young Artilleryman*, London 1661, pp171-174.
- 7See S. Bull 'Evidence for the use of Cartridges in Artillery 1560-1660' in *British Naval Armaments*. R.D. Smith (ed), London 1989, pp3-8.
- 8British Library Harleian manuscript 3783 f61. See also S. Bull, 'Artillery at Edgehill reassessed' in *Journal of the Ordnance Society*, Vol 4, London 1992, pp1-8.
- 9*An Exact and True Relation of the Dangerous and Bloody Fight*, London 1642.
- 10PRO WO 457/f62.
- 11T.S. Clarke (ed), *The Life of James II*, London 1816, pp9-18.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France from the year 1807 to the year 1814, Vols I & II* by William F.P. Napier. Constable & Co Ltd; ISBNs 0-09-471680-3 & -471690-0; Vol I 638pp, Vol II 530pp; mono plates inc maps & appendices (letters, papers, orbats, etc). £18.95 each volume.

Macdonald are to be congratulated on these unabridged facsimile reprints of the first two volumes of Napier's six-volume history of the Peninsula War, long a classic and complementary to Petre's accounts of the central European campaigns. Napier himself fought with the 52nd Regiment of Foot during the retreat to Corunna and later at Busaco, Albuera, Fuentes D'Onoro, Salamanca and in the Pyrenees. When he retired with a musket ball lodged in his spine he began work on this monumental history which was originally published between 1828 and 1840. The books, being based upon first-hand experience as well as contemporary documents, have long been a primary reference source for later writers on the Peninsula campaigns and their reissue at such a moderate price considering the depth of the information they contain will be welcomed by all Napoleonic enthusiasts. Thank you, Macdonald & Co, and we look forward to the release of the remaining four volumes in due course. (Nos III and IV are scheduled for May 1993, V and VI for October 1993.)

*A-Z of the SAS: The battles, the weapons, the training, the men* by Peter Darman. Sidgwick & Jackson; ISBN 0-283-06115-4; 192pp; col & mono illus inc maps throughout; bibliography; £20.00.

Written and illustrated in alphabetical order, this is an attractively produced and well thought-out guide to the Special Air Service Regiment with over 600 entries spanning some 50 years. It does not, of course, go into any great detail on any one subject although many entries are cross-referenced to others, allowing a more balanced picture to be obtained. It is a workmanlike effort by a professional historian which will serve as a good starting point for anyone interested in the SAS, and the bibliography only lists relatively recent books for further reading which should largely still be available. It is also useful for quick reference when you can't pin down a name or a date; in fact, the short biographical notes on SAS personalities are perhaps one of its strongest features.

*Victorian Colonial Warfare: Africa* (ISBN 0-304-34174-6) and *India* (-34172-X) by Donald Featherstone. Cassell; each 160pp; mono illus inc

maps; indices and select bibliographies; £16.99 each.

In these two books the doyen of wargaming returns to one of his favourite historical periods — the Victorian era — and has produced two cracking introductions to two highly popular subjects. The Africa volumes include chapters on Abyssinia 1868, the three campaigns against the Ashantis, those against the Basutos, the 'Kaffirs', the Matabele and Mashona, the Zulus and both the Transvaal and South African Wars against the Boers, as well as the smaller and generally less well-known campaigns in central, east and west Africa. The India volume includes the conquest of Sind, Gwalior War, First and Second Sikh Wars and the Indian Mutiny. The second of the two books is arranged in chronological order while the first unaccountably jumps about, but the contents list and index do allow you to locate specific incidents quickly. Both books are illustrated with contemporary or near-contemporary woodcuts and engravings as well as maps and a few photos from the later period. There are also some good orbats and substantial amount of quoted material from contemporary accounts which help to give a good 'feel' for the Victorian 'Small Wars'.

*Uniforms and Equipment of the United States Forces in the War of 1812* by René Chartrand. Old Fort Niagara Assn Inc, PO Box 169, Youngston, NY 14174-0169, USA; ISBN 0-941967-13-1; 172pp; mono illus throughout; appendices & bibliography. \$14.95 plus \$5 p&p to Europe.

The eminent Canadian historian René Chartrand should need no introduction to readers of 'MI', and he is to be congratulated on this latest scholarly work. As he points out in his preface, the War of 1812-14 is virtually unknown outside North America and Britain, being regarded as a 'sideshow' to more significant events in the Peninsula, Russia and Germany, and comparatively little has been written about it as a consequence.

This volume covers in meticulous detail the uniforms of the Regular Army, the State and Territorial Militias and the Marine Corps, together with their weapons (excluding artillery, which would need a separate book), accoutrements, colours and standards. There are appendices giving in full the major uniform regulations of the period, rank designations, cap plates and buttons, and a chronology of the war listing participating units alongside each action. The text is copiously annotated with source references and there is an extensive bibliography of both published and unpublished sources. Thanks to a detailed contents list,

the lack of an index is not as serious as it might have been.

The book is illustrated on virtually every page with prints, paintings, caricatures, line drawings and photographs of surviving uniform items in museums. The research effort to produce this book must have been immense and the Old Fort Niagara Association (a non-profit organisation) are to be complimented on publishing it.

**Osprey Men-at-Arms series: all 48 pp, approx 35 b/w illus, 8 colour plates; £6.50. MAA 248: Frederick the Great's Army 3: Specialist Troops by Philip Haythornthwaite, plates by Bryan Fosten: ISBN 1-855322-225-0.**

Following the excellent titles on infantry and cavalry, this talented and well-established team tackle 'Old Fritz's' artillery, engineers, jägers, frei-corps, militia hussars, staff, transport, commissariat, medical and chaplain services. The text is in Mr Haythornthwaite's usual style: readable and knowledgeable introductions to the subjects, giving an overall view of their nature and capabilities, followed by unit details, uniform descriptions and tables, equipment, tactics, etc. The monochrome illustrations are the mixture as before, combining studies by such artists as Knötel, Menzel and Röschling with simple line drawings of items of uniform, and tactical diagrams of units' deployment in battle. Mr Fosten's plates are as beautiful as ever — and as generous, giving four splendidly painted figures per plate.

**MAA 249: Canadian Campaigns 1860-70** by David Ross & Grant Tyler, plates by Rick Scollins; ISBN 1-855322-226-9. A less universally popular subject, but a good example of how a limited scope can be covered very thoroughly. The authors, both distinguished Canadian curators, offer a most interesting account of the period when — threatened by external interference and internal revolt — Canada made important steps towards taking over responsibility for her own defence. The monochrome photographs are particularly impressive, offering superb studies of both Queen's and local troops and officers in an interesting range of uniforms, and surviving items from museum collections. These photos, with their detailed captions, are of great interest to all students of the Victorian Army in general, since they are in many cases applicable to the Empire as a whole. Mr Scollins' plates capture the character of the period well. Taken all in all, a very good, workmanlike reference, and recommended.

**Craufurd's Light Division** by Ian Fletcher. Spellmount; ISBN 0-946771-01-4; 240pp; 8pp colour plus mono illus & maps;

**appendix, bibliography & index. £25.00 (UK), \$45.00 (USA).**

Beginning with a short biography of 'Black Bob' Craufurd's early career, including a quite detailed account of the 1806 campaign against the Spanish in the Rio de la Plata (today, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay), this book concentrates on the period from Craufurd's arrival in the Peninsula in 1808 to his death at Ciudad Rodrigo four years later. Ian

they actually look like soldiers: more — they look like GIs. Supporting spreads of kit and insignia 'laid flat' include useful details like typical pack contents. The plain neutral studio backdrops give great clarity of detail; and we would imagine that the convincing poses owe a lot to Mr Lyles' main profession as one of today's best young illustrators. Excellent material, excellently presented, and very reasonably priced: recommended. JS

**Airborne Forces** compiled by Lt-Col T.B.H. Otway. Imperial War Museum Department of Printed Books; ISBN 0-901627-57-7; 468pp; mono plates, maps, appendices & index; limited edn of 500 copies; £22.00.

**Airborne Assault** by Bruce Quarrie. Patrick Stephens; ISBN 0-85059-807-8; 216pp; mono plates, maps, appendices & index; £15.99.

We were going to review Brigadier Julian Thompson's book *Ready For Anything: The Parachute Regiment At War 1940-1982* alongside these other two titles as a summary of the most recent publications on airborne warfare, but unfortunately publishers Weidenfeld & Nicolson inform us that it is no longer in print and that they have no current plans to reprint it. It is easy to summarise, however: the Second World War part which comprises its bulk is almost a paraphrase of the old HMSO publication *By Air To Battle* with few of the mistakes or omissions corrected and little additional information provided. Brigadier Thompson's book does not even include the true facts surrounding the very beginnings of The Parachute Regiment, but this is fortunately covered adequately in Bruce Quarrie's — for the first time outside the regimental magazine *Pegasus*, it must be added.

Nor does Thompson score on more recent history, despite having commanded 3 Cdo Bde in the Falklands, and the book is sadly lacking in orgats. The author also has the irritating habit of introducing personalities by rank and surname only, instead of at least giving initials if not full Christian names. In fact, irritatingly incomplete is probably the best (or only?) phrase with which to describe this book, which perhaps accounts for its present unavailability...

The same cannot be said for Terence Otway's magnificent book, and the Imperial War Museum are to be congratulated for bringing into the public domain what was a 'Confidential' document destined for military academy libraries and first published in 1951. *Airborne Forces* is a facsimile reprint of the original, 'warts and all', and suffers from the fact that at that time even Otway obviously did not have access to — for example — the 'Ultra' secret, even though the book is compiled from official sources as well as the author's own deep knowledge and poignant memories.

For all that, the 'hero of Merville' is extremely self-effacing, and the book is very much a formal, official report, with numbered paragraphs, rather than a personal memoir. It is full of page after page of little-known (if known at all) information, not just on The Parachute Regiment but on allied and enemy forces. It is not what anyone could call an 'easy read' due to the officialese language and need for abbreviation (a glossary would have helped here), but insofar as a single volume on the '39-45 period of airborne warfare can be considered a reliable source, this certainly is. What quibbles arise are mostly those due to the fact that modern readers of the 'MI' ilk are accustomed to the far deeper research and historical perspective of more recent books, but Otway's thick tome is an invaluable historical document which both Brigadier Thompson and Bruce Quarrie would have benefited from reading before writing their own more recent studies.

In fairness to our editor, Quarrie does not pretend that his is a complete history of The Parachute Regiment, although his book does correct errors made by both Thompson and Otway. His volume concentrates on the *airborne* assault part of operations from 1940-1991, even including a very brief and obviously hastily added account of 82nd and 101st Airborne Division operations in the Gulf last year.

Published to coincide with the 50th anniversary year of the battle for Crete, which forms the subject matter of the first chapter and presents a very balanced account, the book attempts — and largely succeeds — in précising just about every parachute or glider-borne operation over the last 50 years or so. It covers the early history of parachuting, the First World War and the Russian experiments of the 'thirties (also touched on by Otway), the whole of the Second World War and right through the activities not just of the Parachute Regiment in Aden, Malaya, etc, but also the experiences of the French in Algeria, Indo-China and at Kolwezi, the Israelis at Mitla Pass (the subject of a very disappointing novel from Leon Uris), the Americans in Korea and Vietnam (where there was only one significantly large drop), and so on.

The detail is so compressed that, unfortunately, this is no 'light' book to read either, but the author's attempt to be comprehensive is more successful than any previous published effort, and he does at least give people their full names and includes reasonable breakdowns of parachute unit organisations.

As with Otway's book, the appendices are valuable — each covers both aircraft and parachutes and each includes information not given by the other, which makes them complementary rather than rivals.

RB

# A Lost Sketchbook

## The 71st Highland Light Infantry on the North-West Frontier, 1863

SOME YEARS AGO many documents and artifacts, acquired during their long histories by the former Royal Scots Fusiliers (21st) and Highland Light Infantry (71st and 74th), were destroyed by a fire in the museum of the amalgamated regiment, The Royal Highland Fusiliers. Among the irreplaceable items lost was a sketchbook compiled on active service by a 71st officer, Captain C.J.H. Howard, during the 1860s.

For many people that decade is chiefly memorable, in military terms, for the American Civil War which has tended to overshadow the activities of the British Army in that period. Nevertheless, not a year of the decade passed without British soldiers being engaged on operations all over the world — Canada, China, New Zealand, Abyssinia, and the Indian frontiers. One campaign on the latter was the now scarcely remembered but hard-fought Umbeyla (or Ambela) Expedition of 1863. It was this that formed the subject of Captain Howard's sketchbook.

Fortunately, and largely through the efforts of this article's illustrator, Douglas Anderson, photographs and notes of Howard's work were made before his sketchbook was destroyed. The purpose of this article is twofold: first, to record something of what was a rare and important piece of illustra-

MICHAEL BARTHORP  
Paintings by DOUGLAS ANDERSON

A BOOK OF sketches drawn on campaign by an officer of the 71st HLI, unfortunately lost in a fire but fortunately photographed beforehand, provides the background for this article on one of the British Army's less well-known campaigns in India.

tive evidence about one of the British Army's campaigns in a somewhat neglected period of its history; and second, to interpret Howard's sketches so as to reconstruct the appearance of his regiment in this North-West Frontier campaign, the first major expedition after the Indian Mutiny and the precursor of the greater ones to follow.

### THE CAMPAIGN IN OUTLINE

The security of the NW Frontier was then the responsibility of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, whose military arm was the Punjab Irregular (later Frontier) Force. Several decades earlier a band of Moslem fanatics from Bengal had established themselves in mountainous country around Sitana in the Yusufzai country, north-east of Peshawar. They were always troublesome and, during the Mutiny, gave sanctuary to many fugitive sepoys. They not only raided and plundered, but set up a subversive underground organisation all across northern India. By late 1863 they had

become such a menace that the Punjab Government decided, though it was late in the year for mountain warfare, to deal with them decisively.

The largest force yet assembled on the Frontier was placed under command of General Sir Neville Chamberlain. 5,542 strong, it consisted of two mountain batteries and six battalions (the Guides, 5th Gurkhas, and four of Punjab Infantry) of the Punjab Irregular Force, to which were added a squadron of Probyn's Horse, the 20th Punjabis, 32nd Pioneers and, of British troops, half Captain Griffin's Royal Artillery battery with elephant-borne guns, the 71st (Highland Light Infantry) and 101st (Royal Bengal Fusiliers).

Chamberlain's plan was to advance through the Umbeyla Pass so as to attack the fanatics' base from the rear and pin them against the Indus where they would be confronted by another force. The advance would impinge on the territory of the Bunerwals who, though co-religionists of the fanatics, were

Douglas Anderson's colour plates overleaf show types of the 71st (Highland Light Infantry) at Umbeyla, 1863, based on Captain Howard's sketchbook (see text for details of uniforms, equipment and weapons).

### Plate I

**A** Sergeant, ready to march to Umbeyla, 19 October.

**B** Private, at Umbeyla, 30 October onwards.

**C** (left) The Bugle-Major; (right) Piper. The Sergeant-Major was uniformed similarly to the Bugle-Major.

**D** Private in working dress.

**E** Marksman, with fir-sprig bonnet distinction.

### Plate II

**F** Company officer, ready for picquet.

**G** Private, in 'Nowshera' greatcoat on night duty.

**H** Officers on night duty or in bad weather.

**I** Lieutenant-Colonel W. Hope, commanding 71st.

**J** (left) Rank and file bonnet badge; (right) officer's forage cap badge.

Pathans and thought to be hostile to them. Unfortunately, in the interests of secrecy, they were not informed until the force was actually in the passm, where the going proved more difficult than anticipated. The Bunerwals took offence and, incited by the fanatics in the name of religion, came out in strength, summoning other tribes from the north-west to their aid. Confronted by vastly superior numbers and unable to withdraw, Chamberlain decided to hold firm in the pass until reinforcements could reach him.

For over a month the force remained under frequent and heavy attack by day and night from massed swordsmen supported by matchlock fire, inter-



Howard's first sketch, captioned 'March to Umbeyla, 19 Oct. Dust awful.' The 71st in foreground with, in rear from left, Probyn's Horse (lancers), Griffin's RA elephant battery and baggage camels.

Plate I

A



C



D

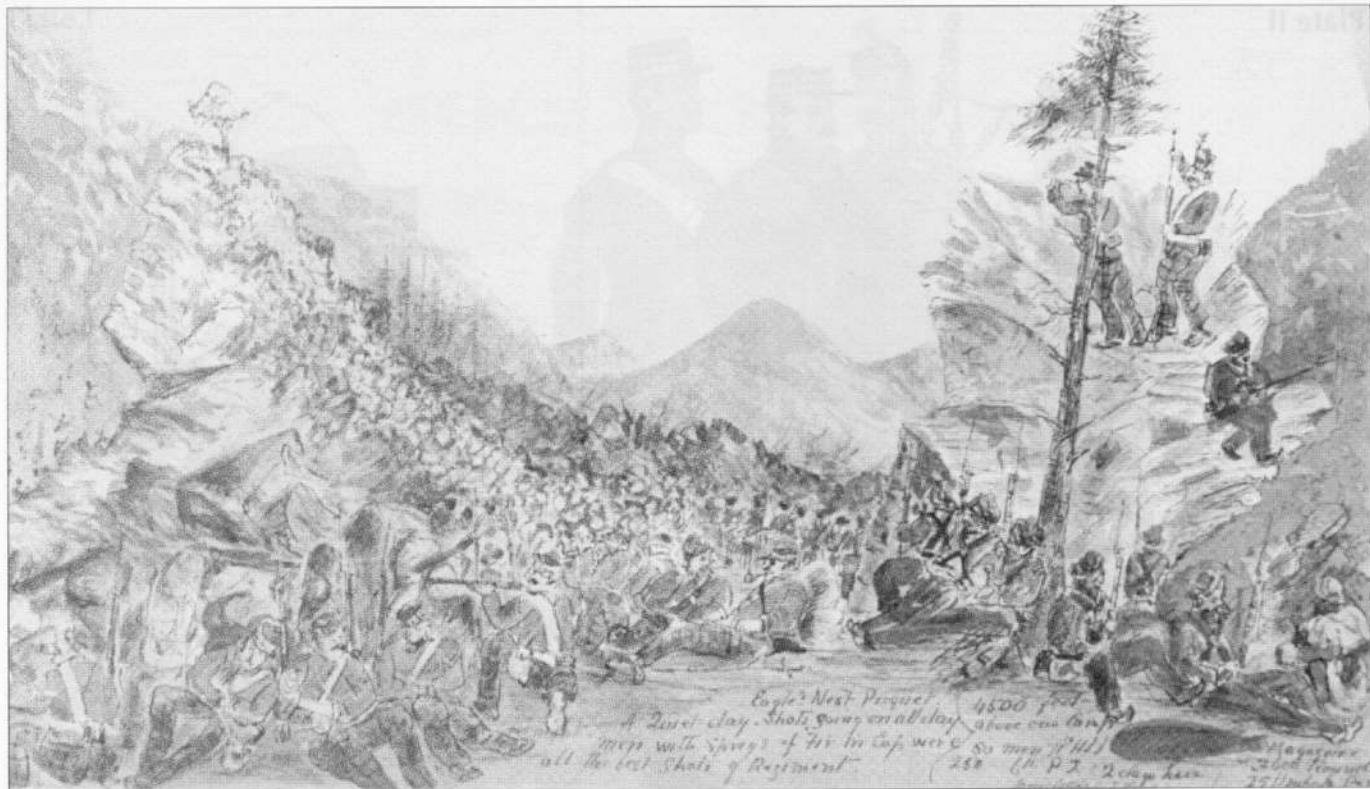


B



Plate II





*'Eagle's Nest Picquet, 4,500 feet above our Camp. A quiet day, shots going on all day.' The picquet was manned on this day by 80 men of the 71st, 250 men of the 6th Punjab Infantry (PIF).*

spersed with constant sniping. The fiercest fighting was for possession of two picquet positions on either side of the pass, Eagle's Nest on the north, Crag on the south. The loss of either would have rendered the camp below untenable, so any tribal success had to be counter-attacked immediately. At the same time the line of communications rearwards had to be improved, again under threat of attack.

Reinforcements arrived and

by mid-December there were 17 battalions at Umbeyla<sup>1</sup>. General Garvoe, who had taken over from the wounded Chamberlain, took the offensive. In two days' fighting the tribes were scattered and an undertaking extracted from the Bunerwals to destroy the fanatics' stronghold and disperse them. This they did, but a planned three-week campaign had taken nearly three months to complete and sustained casualties of 238 killed and 670 wounded.

#### HOWARD AND THE 71ST

Of these the 71st, who had played a major part in the operations, lost five officers<sup>2</sup> and 19 men dead, one officer and 46

men wounded — as Sergeant George Miller, who was present, wrote in his memoirs, 'a truly heavy bill' for 'a short, yet tremendously sharp campaign'.<sup>3</sup> Although the regiment contained a number of young, inexperienced soldiers, it also had 'a goodly number of medalled men, and nearly all the officers were acquainted with living shell'<sup>4</sup> — veterans of the Crimea and Central India campaign of 1858-59<sup>4</sup>.

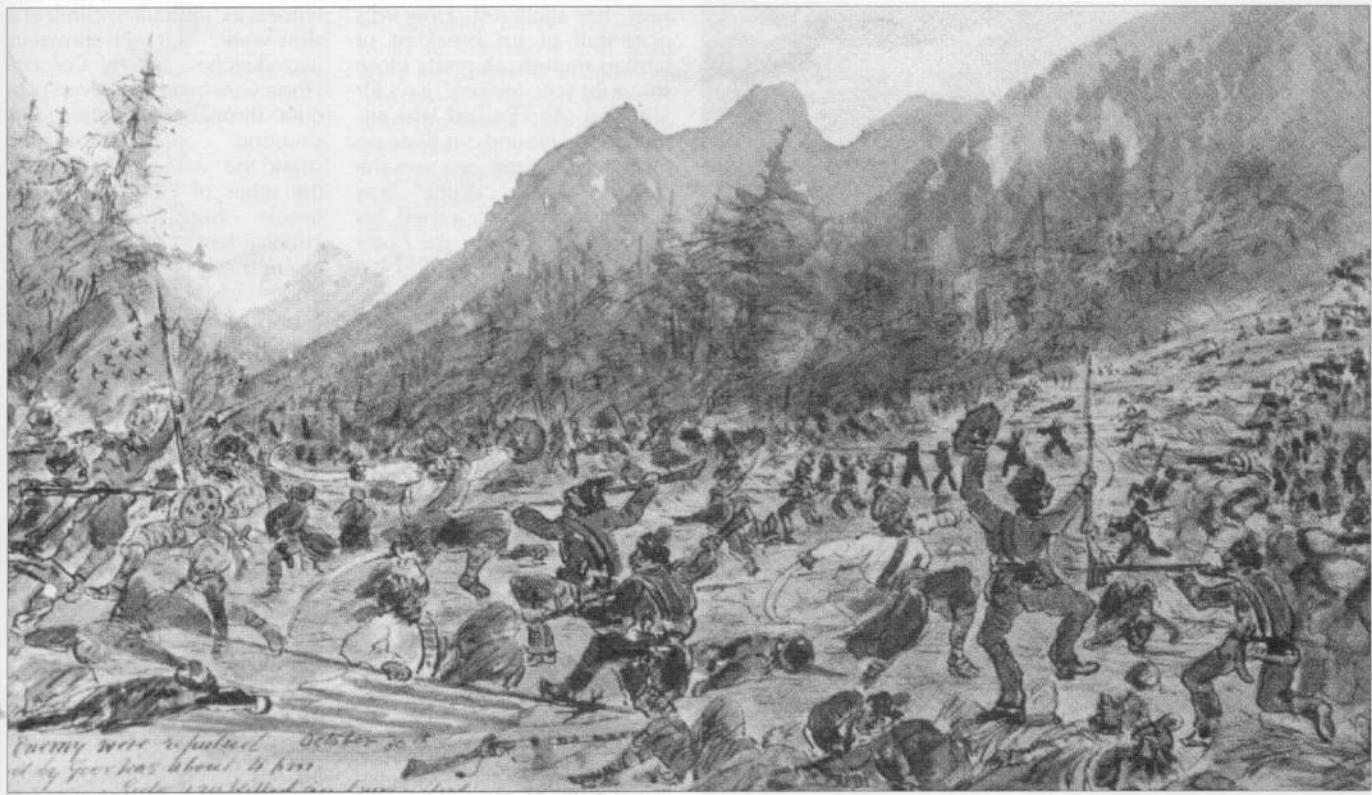
Charles Howard himself had been born in 1835, the son of the Very Rev Hon Henry Howard, Dean of Lichfield, and grandson of the 5th Earl of Carlisle. He was commissioned ensign in the 71st on 31 December 1854 and promoted

lieutenant on 9 March 1855, six months before going to the Crimea. He arrived in India with the regiment in March 1858 and served through the Central India campaign. The 71st remained in India after the Mutiny and Howard obtained his captaincy, by purchase, on 30 January 1863, nine months before the Umbeyla campaign began and in which he served throughout. He retired from the Army in that rank and died on 24 July 1907, aged 72.

As an artist he was a better

*'Griffin's Battery. Making Umbeyla pegs' (see text, Equipment). The battery position is guarded by the 71st and some Punjab Infantry.*





water-colourist than draughtsman, and indeed his figures tend to be caricatures. He was, however, drawing in less than ideal conditions: it was cold, uncomfortable and, given the level of enemy activity, his opportunities for sketching must usually have been hurried and liable to interruption. He nevertheless managed to complete some 50 water-colour sketches of every aspect of the campaign, all with descriptive and often humorous captions.

*'Our Brigade Major, Capt. Jim Campbell, 71st HLI, with a bad cold' giving out daily orders to NCOs of, from left, RA battery, Gurkhas, 71st, 101st, Gurkhas, and various Punjab Infantry. 71st bugler at right.*

Obviously there is insufficient space to discuss them all here, but consideration of a few should give a flavour of this lost document.

#### THE SKETCHBOOK

The first, full-page, drawing shows the 71st in a dress to be described later, marching to Umbeyla on 19 October with, in the background, some lancers of Probyn's, part of the elephant battery and the baggage train. Sergeant Miller recalled they left camp on this day with the pipers playing 'Up an' waur them a', the men having 80 rounds of ball ammunition each and 'cold boiled meat and a few biscuits' in their

haversacks<sup>5</sup>. Howard's caption of 'Dust awful' explains why the men's lower limbs are completely obscured. It was very hot on the march up, made worse by 'no water except some very bad with a blue and yellow skim (sic) on top'. Over this caption Howard has two large Highlanders squabbling for possession of a 'bhisticie's' water skin, three more debating the wisdom of drinking from a pool, and, more decorously, the sergeant-major and three sergeants accepting water from another 'bhisticie'.

Howard shows clearly how difficult the going became once the pass was entered, with steep, pine-covered hillsides closing in on an increasingly

*The Hazara Gurkhas (5th) counter-attacking tribesmen on 30 October.*

narrow, boulder-strewn path<sup>6</sup>. He drew both the baggage train stuck in the pass for two days, and his irate commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Hope, shouting, 'Get on with that drum', to the unfortunate bass drummer who appears to have fallen beneath his instrument which is wedged between two rocks, 'stopping the whole force'.

Once camp was made at the top of the pass, the officers at least were more comfortable and Howard drew them all, each annotated by name, playing 'our first and last game of





The 71st going up to picquet, led by pipers, band and Lieutenant-Colonel Parker, the second-in-command (mounted). Two days were spent on each picquet.

whist' by lantern light between the tents, as a native bearer hands round drinks and sentries keep watch in the background.

The fighting soon began. 'October 21st. First night attack', shows the 71st firing from a stone-built barricade as sword-wielding tribesmen charge up the slope towards them. He comments, 'Bows and arrows were used here, also slings about 8 feet long [which] sent a heavy stone', one of which killed a mountain battery officer. Another sketch depicts the mountain guns in action with Indian gunners, protected by 71st men with Punjab Infantry coming up in support.

It was now very cold at nights and sometimes wet as well. All ranks had their greatcoats but a warming fire lit within a sangar drew 'shots [which] hit our kettle of grog. All lost, worst luck.'

Had to put fire out.' The hopeful grog-drinkers look suitably dismayed.

Howard made two views of a massed attack on the sangars on 30 October, one from the 71st side, the other of the tribesmen, 'many old sepoys among them', surging forward regardless of the fire. Severe hand-to-hand fighting can be seen in a drawing of an attack upon a party covering road construction on 6 November, which cost the 71st, 4th and 5th Gurkhas many casualties. All the 71st dead were found next day 'slashed to bits'. A Mutiny VC, Private Rodgers, had been wounded but was found alive, having fallen, he said, into a hole 15 feet deep. Later he told his comrades in camp it was 40 feet, earning, as Howard shows, a fiery rebuke from the 71st doctor, Simpson: 'Now don't tell any more lies. I heard you tell the Colonel quite another story.'

Even on quiet days there was trouble from snipers, particularly one, 'Willie', who fired all day until sunset. On one occa-

sion he shattered Howard's plate full of his breakfast of hashed mutton. 'A pretty close shave for you, my boy', says Dr Simpson. As Howard was sitting on the ground, his plate on his lap at the time, one sees the doctor's point. 'Willie' was eventually killed by a shell, his demise celebrated by the 71st's band playing 'Oh Willie, we have missed you' as they went up to picquet.

The near-precipitous climb to some of the picquet positions is graphically, and often humorously, shown in several drawings: the difficulties of evacuating wounded in hammocks and 'dhoohlies', or how two of Griffin's guns were emplaced on an overhanging ledge, despite the upset of one elephant which is apparently turning turtle. In another, men of the 71st are glissading down from the Water Picquet on their backsides after being relieved by Punjab Infantry. Despite enemy sniping and the steep climb, the 71st seem to have marched up to picquet accompanied by their band and pipes.

Occasionally pathos emerges from a sketch, as when Howard drew the retrieval of the body of his 'greatest friend', Captain Aldridge, who 'joined same day at Winchester 1854', and who was killed at the Water Picquet on 19 November, the day after completing a long and hurried journey to rejoin the regiment from leave.

There is, however, more humour than sadness in Howard's work despite the dangers and discomfort they all faced, like the dramatic result of tribesmen trying to melt down an unexploded shell on a fire to obtain more lead for their matchlock balls; or Howard himself, suffering from a heavy cold, about to have a mustard plaster applied to chest by his servant, Pollock, just as the 'Assembly' sounds; the contorted positions of off-duty men trying to sleep in the confined and rocky interior of a sangar; or the jollities of 'Our Mac [the Quartermaster] showing the art of self-defence' at a 71st officers' guest night — peacetime customs obviously being maintained even on active service. The burly Mac was clearly something of a character as two other drawings feature him being restored with strong waters after his narrow escape from mounted tribesmen whom he had mistaken for Indian cavalry.

The difficulty of the 71st's counter-attack to retake Crag Picquet on 20 November — a hill described by another eye-

witness as 'difficult to climb at a slow walk' — is well shown in two sketches: one of Colonel Hope viewing the overrun picquet through binoculars and shouting, 'Sergeant-Major, sound the "assembly" at once'; the other of Hope, his piper beside him, leading his Highlanders in the final charge through the pine-trees. As Miller wrote: 'With a real Scottish cheer, our grand old boys went right up the face of the steep, rocky brae. Shells from the guns flying over our heads into the midst of the foe, who all the time kept up a heavy fire and rolling rocks down on the regiment'. He reckoned they recaptured the Crag in less than 20 minutes, just as Chamberlain had ordered their Colonel. If so, and Howard's drawing was correct topographically, this represented remarkable fitness, agility and aggression on the 71st's part, and not least on Colonel Hope's who, though approaching his 45th birthday, not only led all the way but, on reaching the picquet, was 'considerably in advance of the regiment'. Not surprisingly, he was badly wounded in the thigh.

The recapture of Crag Picquet was the 71st's last major action at Umbeyla, Garvoch's final assault on the tribes on 15 December being led by the 7th and 101st Fusiliers. Howard marked the occasion with a drawing of the 71st's padre bringing in a captured enemy flag, escorted by men of the 101st, as native infantry go forward in single file.

Howard concluded his drawings with sketches of tribal arms used in the fighting, the monument erected at Nowshera by the regiment to their dead, and a picture of himself enduring a bone-shaking ride to Nowshera in a horse-drawn 'gharry': '19 miles and not sorry when the drive came to an end'.

## UNIFORMS

The 71st was unique in the Army as being both a Highland and a light infantry regiment. Its full dress uniform at this period, of shako, Highland doublet and Mackenzie tartan trews, can be seen in the accompanying drawing by P.W. Reynolds. Officers were broadly similar but with a plaid fastened on, and their crimson sashes passing over the left shoulder with accoutrements, a waistbelt for the dirk and a shoulder belt with slings for the broadsword. In undress officers wore a green, diced forage cap with peak, a blue frock coat or scar-



*Private of the 71st in full dress, 1863. This shows a different expense pouch on the waistbelt to that used at Umbeyla. (Drawing by P.W. Reynolds.)*

let shell jacket, the men a blue, diced forage cap, or 'humble' bonnet, and a white shell jack-

et, all with trews. The only ranks in kilts, hose and spats were the pipers, who additionally wore a green glengarry with blackcock feather and a green doublet.

Except for the pipers and all ranks' trews, Howard shows little of this worn at Umbeyla. For those unfamiliar with the period, and with such Indian modifications to home service clothing as existed at the time, his sketches are not, by their nature very informative. They have therefore been interpreted for this article in Douglas Anderson's colour plates. Some additional explanation may be helpful.

Although various shades and types of khaki clothing had been widely adopted during the Indian Mutiny<sup>10</sup>, British regiments in India thereafter reverted to former practice which, in broad terms, was white cotton drill for summer, cloth or serge in the home service colours for winter. As to headgear, the old practice of furnishing the home service dress or undress caps with white covers, and sometimes curtains, had given way by the 1860s to the general adoption of some type of sun helmet, made of pith, wicker or felt, covered in white drill. At the beginning of the Mutiny, these had been the prerogative of a few, usually staff officers but towards its end they were reaching all ranks. The commonest type in the 1860s had a ventilator, or air-pipe, forming a crest.

Following the general introduction in 1855 of the tunic as

the upper dress garment throughout the Army (doublet for Highlanders), the old undress shell jacket began to be replaced in India, from 1856, by a loose-fitting serge frock, skirted like the tunic, but with only five buttons in front and usually a flapped, left breast pocket, in the same colour as the tunic.

Given these facts, it can be deduced from Howard's sketches, first, that the 71st marched to Umbeyla in helmets, these being bound with a red pagri. Though his rendering of them is sketchy, it seems they must have been of the air-pipe type; photographs of other India-based British battalions show them in use in 1860 and 1868, and they were not abolished until 1872. Sergeant Miller mentioned that, during the march up, a useful cooling device was a wrung-out sponge placed inside the top of the helmet. Howard's early sketches show helmets worn by all ranks, except at night or off-duty, but they soon gave way to forage caps and, after 30 October, not a helmet appears, probably because, as Miller noted, 'our white helmets were a grand target for a cool, keen shot'<sup>11</sup>. The 71st maintained a detachment of marksmen, formed from the best shots, who were distinguished by small fir-sprigs fastened behind the bugle-horn above '71' on their bonnets. Howard shows a number of them, including his above-mentioned soldier-servant, Pollock. A photograph taken of these men after the

campaign includes one sergeant and 17 rank and file.

On Howard's upper garments there are no signs of the 71st's buff facings nor the doublet's distinctive cuffs and skirts, so clearly they are serge frocks. Miller commented, presumably ironically, that 'our clothing was well adapted for the long, warm march, but rather light and airy for the keen, cold mountain air'. He also thought it, and their white belts, compared poorly with the drab uniforms and dark equipment of the PIF battalions<sup>12</sup>. Against the cold, the latter had Afghan-type 'poshtees', as can be seen in a photograph of the 3rd Sikhs, one of the later arrivals, but the 71st had greatcoats carried rolled over the right shoulder when not worn. These were not the regulation issue but, as Howard explains in one sketch, 'the men had blue greatcoats served out at Nowshera before starting'; obviously of local manufacture but seemingly made to the same cut as the regulation grey coats, with a cape. When going on picquet a blanket was added to the rolled greatcoats.

From the evidence of photographs taken at Umbeyla and others of the period, it is possible that the air-pipe helmets were only issued to soldiers,

*The 71st's padre, escorted by 101st men, bringing in an enemy flag after the 15 December attack on Laloo. Punjab Infantry at right; Crag Picquet in background.*





Officers in full dress and undress (first, second and seventh from left). Second left is 74th, but the uniform was essentially the same.  
(Lithograph after J. Ferguson.)

officers generally having a different, probably superior pattern which they purchased and having a plain, domed top. Whether this applied in the 71st cannot be said with any certainty from Howard's sketches, though these do show officers with the same red pagris.

The details of the officers' frocks in the drawings are obscure but a common type of the period had piping round the collar, down the front edge, round the skirts and on the cuffs; rank badges were usually worn on the collar. As over-garments Howard shows a grey greatcoat or a shorter, mid-thigh length coat of greyish material, both types single-breasted. The latter may have been the 'bunny' coats, popular among officers in the Crimean War — in which several of the 71st officers at Umbeyla had served — so called from the rabbit fur linings. One officer in the afore-mentioned photograph of the marksmen wears a quilted coat, of the same shade as the men's frocks; such coats, in red or blue, had been worn by some officers in the Sikh Wars, 14 years before.

Some officers wore their trews loose like the men, others appear with them rolled up above, or tucked into, laced boots coming well above the ankle, not unlike a modern combat boot. Colonel Hope always appears in spurred, knee-high boots, similar to those ordered for all mounted

men from 1872, but quite non-regulation in 1863.

The 71st's sergeant-major appears occasionally in an officer's pattern forage cap, frock with crown above four-bar chevron on the upper arm, and trews. The bugle-major was uniformed similarly. Howard sometimes shows the pipers as, alone of the regiment, having little or no modification to their parade dress as described above.

#### EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Howard's rendering of the men's accoutrements is rudimentary but clear enough to indicate they had the 'knapsack' equipment, less that article which was transported with the baggage: the shoulder pouch belt, suspending the large 60-round pouch at the right rear, and waistbelt with bayonet frog. Two items he usually omits, but which are visible in the marksmen's photograph, are the small pouch for percussion caps fixed to the front of the shoulder belt, and the expense pouch on the waistbelt, holding the 20 rounds balance of the 80 mentioned by Miller. Though Howard includes haversacks over the right shoulder, he implies the 71st relied entirely on their 'bhistics' for water as none of the leather-covered soda-water bottles used in India at this date and later can be seen on the men. Such bottles were

around in plenty as Howard shows them being used as 'Umbeyla pegs', an *ad hoc* delayed action hand grenade, filled with stones, gunpowder and slow match, fired by a man's pipe. In the 'bad water' sketch the men seem to be using pannikins as drinking vessels, which presumably went in the haversacks.

Miller reveals that the 71st were armed, as might be expected, with the 1853 pattern Enfield rifle, which was muzzle-loading, percussion-fired and sighted to 1,200 yards, and took the 17-inch, triangular section bladed, socket bayonet. The sergeants' rifle was six inches shorter and normally had a 22½-inch-bladed sword bayonet, although the sergeant in the marksmen's photograph has a socket bayonet. The pipers were armed with broadswords.

The officers' broadswords are all shown with the undress, cross-bar guard instead of the basket hilt, which does, however, feature on the sergeant-major's broadsword. The bugle-major is armed like the sergeant-major and also carries a bugle slung on a green cord. How the broadswords were suspended is not that clear in the drawings, but they appear to hang from black leather slings attached to a waistbelt worn under the frock. In a few instances there are indications of the waistbelt being worn outside and, in one case, where the

sword belt is under the frock, its wearer has an additional waistbelt outside — perhaps for his dirk or possibly an obscured revolver holster. Curiously, there are few signs of the latter, despite being much used in the Crimea and the Mutiny, although in one case it can be seen on the back of a waistbelt. Greatcoats are mostly, but not universally, rolled over the shoulder and there are suggestions of binocular and compass cases. In the best traditions of the British officer on service, there is a distinct lack of uniformity in their appearance.

#### OTHER UNIFORMS

Although Howard was obviously primarily concerned with the 71st, he occasionally shows other men of the force. The RA gunners of Griffin's battery feature a few times, initially, like the 71st, in helmets, but later in their blue pillbox forage caps with a red band, worn with blue stable jackets and trousers. The latter are tucked into long boots, which formed no part of the regulation Royal Artillery dress at this period; possibly these might be cast-off jacked boots as had been worn by the Bengal Horse Artillery before it was incorporated into the Royal Regiment after the Mutiny. Griffin's battery belonged to 19th Brigade, Royal Artillery, which formerly had been a company of the Bengal Artillery.

The 101st Fusiliers are

dressed similarly to the 71st, in forage caps, red frocks with their regimental blue facings, and dark blue trousers. The Gurkha regiments are shown in black with forage caps. This colour was also worn by the 1st Punjab Infantry (PIF), but the other Indian regiments in the drawings have blue or brown pagris with a red 'kulla', drab frocks and drab or blue trousers. Lord Roberts, who was present as a staff captain, recorded that the 14th Sikhs, one of the reinforcing battalions, had red pagris<sup>1</sup>. A photograph of the 93rd Highlanders guarding prisoners shows them dressed the same as the 71st except for their kilts, hose and spats.

### CONCLUSION

Sketching on active service was not uncommon among 19th century officers and examples of their work during several campaigns can still be found, thereby providing valuable first-hand evidence of life on service and the appearance of those involved. Yet seldom can there have been such an extensive record of one regiment, on one relatively short campaign, by one of its members, as Howard's sketches of the 71st at Umbeyla. Its loss beyond recovery is therefore all the more tragic, not only for the Royal Highland Fusiliers, the successors of the 71st, but also for all students of the British Army's history and its great variety of campaigning. It is hoped this article has retrieved at least something from the ashes. MI

### Notes

1. Including the 7th Royal Fusiliers, 93rd Highlanders and 4th Gurkhas.
2. Including two 79th Highlanders, attached 71st.
3. *Highland Light Infantry Chronicle*, 1900, p522, and 1899, p340.
4. See 'MI/21, p19.
5. *HLI Chronicle*, 1899, p341.
6. His representation of the terrain is confirmed by photographs taken by a Gurkha officer, H. Senior.
7. Colonel J.M. Adye, RA, letter dated 'Umbeyla 26 Nov 1863' (*Journal of Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol xix, p40).
8. *HLI Chronicle*, 1900, p461.
9. Sergeant-Major (later Captain) J. Blackwood, *HLI Chronicle*, 1899, p327.
10. See 4 above.
11. *HLI Chronicle*, 1899, p404.
12. *Ibid*, pp341, 372.
13. Lord Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India* (1900), p286.

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### GALLERY

# 'Peter of Arabia'

WILL FOWLER

Paintings by PETER DENNIS

LIKE LAWRENCE, Peter de la Billière's army career has been dominated by two factors: covert operations and the Middle East. A modest, unassuming soldier, his name was practically unknown to the general public until Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher appointed him commander of British forces in the Gulf in 1990, yet he has been involved in many of the most spectacular SAS operations over the last 35 years.

GENERAL SIR PETER de la Cour de la Billière, KCB, KBE, DSO, MC\*, was known informally during the Gulf conflict as 'General Peter' and prior to that as 'DLB'. Born in 1934, he was educated at Harrow before securing a commission in the Durham Light Infantry, serving with 1 DLI in Japan and Korea before spending two years in the Suez Canal Zone and Jordan — his first contact with the Middle East.

In 1956 he succeeded in transferring to the Special Air Service Regiment and, as a Captain, in February 1958 he parachuted into the Telok Anson swamp in Malaya as a member of Major Harry Thompson's 'D' squadron. Their task was to hunt down the notorious communist terrorist Ah Hoi, nicknamed 'Baby Killer' for his slaughter of an informant's pregnant wife. After nearly a month wading through the leech-infested wilderness, the squadron finally pinned Ah Hoi down; he surrendered and was exiled to China. Captain de la Billière was Mentioned in Despatches for his part in the operation.

In 1958 it was back to the Middle East, for the pro-British Sultan of Oman was facing open insurrection from Sulaiman bin Himyar, chief of the Bani Riyam tribe, supported by the Iman Ghali bin Himyar and his brother Talib. They had secured a feature known as the Djebel Akhdar — the Green Mountain — and declared independence from the Sultanate. The Djebel Akhdar is a fertile plateau about 20 miles by ten rising some 10,000 feet above the surrounding landscape and ringed by steep cliffs of shale and rock. It has only 12 approaches, all of which can be easily defended, and although Talib only had some 500 armed tribesmen and 180 snipers, it was a tough nut to crack given

manded by Captain de la Billière made a ten-hour march through hostile territory to put itself within 200 metres of a cave which housed a rebel ammunition store. Using a 3.5-inch rocket launcher, they attempted to explode the ammunition but came under heavy fire from snipers concealed in other caves overlooking their position. An air strike by RAF Venoms took out a rebel mortar position, but the Troop's position was untenable and they were forced to make a fighting withdrawal, covered by 'Tankie' Smith's .30 Browning machine-gun.

At the beginning of January 1959, Major Watts discovered from aerial photos a route from the village of Kamah between the Wadi Kamah and Wadi Suwaiq — but it was covered by a .50 machine-gun position. Dissembling, Watts allowed the squadron's Arab donkey handlers learn that the SAS were going to assault another position, codenamed 'Sabrina', in the full knowledge that this information would find its way back to the rebels. The ruse worked and a diversionary attack held the rebels' attention while three Troops, led by that commanded by de la Billière, assaulted the principal objec-

General Sir Peter de la Billière with other British officers in the Gulf.  
(Bob Morrison/Military Scene.)





A Challenger MBT of 7th Armoured Division in the Gulf. (Author.)

tive, codenamed 'Beercan'. The assault involved a nine-hour climb in darkness up a 4,000-foot slope, which included a precipitous traverse requiring ropes.

The men reached the plateau, captured the machine-gun and its crew, and raced on for the summit of 'Beercan', from which they could dominate the area. The three front runners in the race were Johnny Watts, Peter de la Billière and Arnhem veteran Tony Deane-Drummond. As dawn broke, the squadron had control; aerial resupply and air strikes by Venoms clinched their victory, forcing the rebel leaders to flee the country. Within a month the insurrection was over. Captain de la Billière received the Military Cross for his part in the operation — a classic example of courage, guile and economy of force which has become the SAS hallmark.

De la Billière then returned to the UK for a period before, in 1962, sailing the 22-foot sloop *Cape Albacore* from Falmouth to Aden to serve on attachment with the Federal Regular Army. Two years later he returned to Aden as CO of 'A' Squadron, 22 SAS, leading operations in the Radfan mountains and conducting covert 'Keeni Meeni'\* missions.

In 1965 'A' Squadron was posted to Borneo, where the fledgling Malayan Federation was under attack from President Sukarno's Indonesian forces. De la Billière helped foster good relations with the simple border tribes and devised improved logistic support for patrols operating deep in the jungle. Working closely with the Gurkhas, the SAS initiated a

series of top secret cross-border 'Claret' raids which helped keep Sukarno's troops off balance and reduced their offensive capability. For his achievements here, de la Billière was awarded a Bar to his MC.

After completing the Staff Course at Camberley and a Staff appointment at HQ, UK Land Forces, he returned to 22 SAS as second in command and subsequently as 'Boss'. During this period the regiment was again involved in operations in Oman against communist insurgents.

Following the Munich Olympic Games massacre of Israeli athletes, de la Billière was tasked with creating an élite SAS counter-terrorist unit. The effectiveness of this was demonstrated at Mogadishu in 1977 and most spectacularly during the Iranian Embassy siege in London in 1980. De la Billière was awarded the DSO for this work.

In the meanwhile, following two years on the Directing Staff of the Army Staff College, Camberley, de la Billière took his family on an adventurous trek by Land Rover across the Nubian Desert to take command of the British Army Training Team in Sudan. Then, between 1979 and 1983, he commanded SAS Group — 21, 22 and 23 SAS — and was awarded the CBE in the 1983 New Year's Honours List in recognition of his men's immense contribution towards success in the Falklands.

From June 1984 to July 1985 he was Military Commissioner and OC British Forces, Falklands, then from September 1985 to November 1987; now with the rank of Major-General, he commanded Wales District. In December 1986 he became Colonel

Commandant of the Light Division — something the raw Second Lieutenant in the DLI could hardly have foreseen 30 years earlier. The following year he took up the post of GOC, South-East District, and Permanent Peacetime Commander of the Joint Force Operations Staff. A year later, and approaching retirement, he was awarded the KCB. But the climax of his career was yet to come.

On 6 October 1990 Lieutenant-General Sir Peter de la Billière was given command of the British forces deployed in Saudi Arabia on Operation 'Granby'. Under his command, British forces expanded from approximately 14,000 at the beginning of November to over 45,000 at the end of hostilities with Iraq. Sir Peter's ability to speak Arabic was well received and the good working relationship, which developed into a close friendship, with Coalition Forces' commander General Norman Schwarzkopf, ensured that British forces integrated effectively with their allies. Sir Peter's intimate knowledge of special forces contrasted with Schwarzkopf's more conventional background, and some observers feel that their highly effective use in Iraq was attributable to his influence.

While not a natural public speaker, during press and TV briefings in Riyadh Sir Peter came across as clear-headed, caring and modest and generated confidence both at home and in Saudi Arabia. He returned to public acclaim, promotion to full General, and an appointment as special advisor to the Ministry of Defence on Middle Eastern matters. Since retiring, he has written a book — *Storm Command* — about the Gulf War. **MJ**

Peter Dennis' reconstructions on the back cover show, left, Captain de la Billière as a Troop commander in 'A' Squadron, 22 SAS, on Christmas Day 1958 in the Djebel Akhdar. He carries a Sterling SMG and wears a lightweight sweater, battledress trousers, rubber-soled boots and puttees. Warm clothing was essential because at 8,000 feet in the mountains, the wind blows incessantly and at night it is cold enough to freeze the water in water bottles. The harsh shale cliffs wore out boots in days. The puttees provided ankle support — essential for climbers — and helped stop stones and grit getting into the men's boots.

The serge trousers were tough and warm and could take considerable punishment. The short pullover, designed to be worn under the BD blouse, is not bulky and adds an extra layer of warmth beneath a windproof smock. Photographs show troopers wearing headgear varying from the woollen cap comforter to pale khaki bush hats and even the beige SAS beret. **Right,** Lieutenant-General Sir Peter de la Billière, Saudi Arabia, 1991. Here he wears the standard two-colour desert uniform produced at short notice for British troops in the Gulf. It consists of a button and zip fronted cotton jacket and trousers. Footwear is the canvas and web desert boot which resembles the US Army's jungle boot. The General has temperate green rank slides on his epaulettes and his name and rank in English and Arabic on a purple name badge. (Purple is seen as a tri-Service colour since it combines the dark blue of the Royal Navy, red of the Army and pale blue of the Royal Air Force.) He wears General's cap insignia on his SAS beret. Unlike many of the senior Coalition officers, Sir Peter carries a weapon — a 9mm Browning in a '58 pattern holster on a '58 pattern belt. His NBC clothing and equipment is carried in a back pack by his ADC, a Light Infantry Major. Being all-cotton, the British desert uniform was difficult to keep smart in the heat and dust and sometimes looked untidy even on the General. But Sir Peter has long enjoyed a reputation for operational efficiency rather than 'spit and polish' and his slight untidiness is recognised as the sign of a military leader with the right priorities.

\*Swahili words for a snake's sinuous movement.

# General Sir Peter de la Billière



Captain, 22 SAS, Oman, 1958

See article page 49



General, Saudi Arabia, 1991